CORTLAND, N.Y. – Cortland claimed its seventh straight State University of New York Athletic Conference title, its 12th in the last 13 years and its 23rd overall with a 5-2 win over Brockport in the championship round of the conference tournament. The Red Dragons, ranked fourth nationally in Division III, earn the league’s NCAA automatic bid and will be making their 11th consecutive trip to the Division III national playoffs. Cortland improved to 30-9 with the victory and has won at least 30 games each of the last 10 seasons.

Sophomore Mike Burnett (Westfield) earned the victory, allowing six hits and two runs, one earned, in seven and one-third innings. He recorded seven strikeouts and walked two. Senior Craig Robinson (Stony Point/North Rockland) pitched the final one and two-third innings for his first save. He gave up one hit and struck out two.

Senior Jeff Flegler (Gloucester, NJ) was 2-for-4 with two RBI and junior Matt Ellis (Owego/Owego Free Academy) finished 2-for-3 for the Red Dragons. Brockport sophomore Jason Waite (Rochester/Eastridge) took the loss. In seven innings he gave up seven hits and five runs, four earned. He fanned five batters and walked three. Junior Mike Ranalli (Niagara Falls/Niagara-Wheatfield) and sophomore John Morgan (Hilton) each went 2-for-4.

Cortland took a 1-0 lead in the bottom of the first when senior Cory Haggerty (Ilion) was hit by a pitch and Flegler hit an RBI double to left center. The Red Dragons added a run in the second. Senior Brian Huber (Blue Point/St. John the Baptist) was hit by a pitch and advanced to second on an Ellis single to right. With two outs, freshman Andy Mead (Baldwinsville/C.W. Baker) walked to load the bases and Huber scored on a wild pitch.

Brockport closed its deficit to 2-1 in the top of the sixth. Ranalli led off with a bunt single and senior Andy Madden (Corning/Corning East) followed with a single to right. Ranalli went to third on the hit and scored on the play when Mead’s throw to third was wild. Madden went to second on the play and advanced to third with one out after a groundout. Burnett escaped further trouble with two more groundouts.

In the bottom of the seventh, Mead singled up the middle with one out and stole second when Haggerty struck out. Flegler drove in Mead with a hard single up the middle. Brockport answered with its best rally of the game in the top of the eighth. Ranalli singled to start the frame and a Morgan single with one out put runners on first and second. Robinson relieved Burnett and got Andy Peterson (Bloomingburg/Pine Bush) to hit a ball to short, but an error allowed everyone to be safe and the bases were loaded. Junior Rob Gladwell (Cheektowaga) then hit a line drive into left center that appeared to be a possible extra-base hit, but Cortland left fielder Pat D’Auria (Nyack) made a great diving catch. Ranalli scored from third on the sacrifice fly to pull Brockport within 3-2, but Robinson got a fielder’s choice grounder to end the inning.

Cortland tacked on two insurance runs in the bottom of the eighth. D’Auria reached on an infield single and Neal Heaton Jr. (Bellport) walked. Two batters later, pinch-hitter Nate Gagnon (Wilton/South Glens Falls) doubled down the left field line off reliever Mike Dank (Fairport) to drive in D’Auria. With two outs, an error on Mead’s grounder to third allowed Heaton to score. Brockport put two runners on in the ninth on a leadoff single by pinch-hitter Matt Johnson (Kingston) and a one-out hit batsman. Robinson, though, closed the game by striking out Ranalli and getting Madden to hit a soft liner to short.
### SUNYAC Baseball Tournament (Game 6 - Championship Round) (May 4, 2003)

#### Final Score: Cortland 5, Brockport 2

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Brockport (29-8): Jason Waite (L, 3-2), Mike Dank (8) and Andy Madden  
Cortland (30-9): Mike Burnett (W, 4-1), Craig Robinson (8, Save 1) and Kyle Bestine  

HR - none  
3B - none  
2B - Jeff Flegler (C), Ben Albright (C), Nate Gagnon (C)