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Shakopee wins big over Sleepy Eye VFW

By Jim Bastian, New Ulm Journal sports writer, posted July 27, 2012,

NEW ULM - It was not the kind of performance that the Sleepy Eye VFW baseball team wanted in its opening round game of the Second District VFW Baseball Tournament against Shakopee.

Shakopee jumped out to a 13-0 lead after three innings before exploding for seven runs in the fourth. In the end, it was too much to overcome as Shakopee topped Sleepy Eye 20-9 Thursday morning at Johnson Park.

Game One

The game ended after 4 1/2 innings because of the 10-run rule.

Chad Sorenson was the winning pitcher for Shakopee. He went three innings and did not allow a run while allowing one hit. John Mangen took the loss for Sleepy Eye. He was charged with eight runs in his two innings of work.

Sheldon Miks led the Shakopee attack with four hits. Shakopee finished with 15 hits in the game.

Dom Schlepper, Henry Henk, Sorenson and Justin Nicho all had two hits. Nicho drove in six runs while Sorenson had four RBI.

Lucas Heiderscheidt and Jon Kopacek each had two hits for Sleepy Eye, with Carter Krzmarzick driving in three runs.

Sleepy Eye now plays Fairmont in an elimination game at 1 p.m. today at Mueller Park.

"We had a rough start today," Post 800 coach Dusty Mangen said. "For some reason, we have not played well in our opening playoff games - we pretty much did the same thing on our sub-districts where we got down early. It is tough to come back from that."

Sleepy Eye put itself behind the eight-ball in the opening inning when Shakopee sent 11 men to the plate and scored five times.

An RBI double from Schlepper coupled with run-scoring singles courtesy of Henk and Sorenson, a groundout and a hit batsman put Sleepy Eye in a hole right away. That deficit became bigger when Post 4046 added three more runs in the second and then scored five more in the third for a 13-0 lead.

"John [Mangen] had a tough time throwing strikes today," Dusty Mangen said. "And when he did get ahead in the count at 0-2, he threw too good of a pitch. They have good hitters."

While Shakopee was piling on the runs, Sleepy Eye was struggling offensively thanks to Sorenson, who allowed only a one-out single to Kopacek in the second. But in the fourth, Sleepy Eye's bats came alive off of reliever Alex Haller, who was pounded for nine runs and six hits in his 2/3 of an inning of work.

A groundout, a Kopacek double, a two-run triple from Krzmarzick and an Elliot Braun single cut the lead to 13-6. David Suprenant's two-run double and a Heiderscheidt double pulled Post 800 to within 13-9. But Shakopee countered that with seven runs in the bottom of the inning for a 20-9 lead.

"We can build off of that nine-run inning for today," coach Mangen said. "We had the same thing happen to us in the sub-district and we came out and hit the ball well to get us here. Hopefully that continues and we are positive."



Sleepy Eye 2B John Mangen waits for the ball as Austin Leadstrom slides safely into second during the opening game.

Hastings strands Fairmont

By Charlie Sorrells - Sports Editor , Fairmont Sentinel July 27, 2012

NEW ULM - Leadoff batter Drew Pottinger and No. 9 hitter Thomas Roob bookended the Hastings VFW Post 1210 baseball team's balanced offensive attack during Thursday's first-round playoff game in New Ulm.

Pottinger and Roob equally combined to go 4-for-8, including half of Hastings' four extra-base hits, with two RBIs to pace a 7-3 triumph over Fairmont Post 1222 at Johnson Park.

"We just stranded too many runners today, and couldn't get that key hit when we needed one," Post 1222 mentor Todd Sukalski said in reference to his team's 11 stranded runners on the game.

Hastings starting pitcher Mitch Donahoe and sure-handed shortstop Zach Benning played integral roles in preventing Fairmont from hanging a crooked number on the scoreboard.

Bailey Koppen and Cole Emler produced back-to-back hits with two outs in the home half of the second inning only to have Donahoe record one of his three strikeouts on the game to thwart the threat.

The Hastings right-handed hurler duplicated that feat in the last of the third after issuing back-to-back two-out walks to Jay Ruen and Trason Arens, only to avert damage via a strikeout.

Meanwhile, in the top of the third, Pottinger and Cody Marek delivered a pair of pivotal triples to ignite Hastings' three-run outburst. Pottinger led off with a triple before scoring on Michael Junker's RBI single.

Ruen issued a walk to Donahoe before Marek unleashed a towering two-run, two-out triple to deep center to plate Junker and courtesy runner Austin LaDoux for a 3-0 edge.

Fairmont, however, did assemble a two-out rally in the last of the fourth frame to spoil Donahoe's shutout bid. Emler singled, pinch hitter Jonathon Soucek walked and Spencer Chirpich drilled an RBI single to left to plate Emler.

Hastings recouped the solo run via a leadoff walk to Donahoe and Patrick Rough's RBI single with two out in the top of the fifth.

Ruen then answered in the home half of the inning by working out a leadoff walk, swiping second and crossing the plate on Josh Eversman's line-drive single down the third-base line. Despite allowing Eversman's RBI hit, Pottinger worked out of the first-and-second jam by recording two of his four strikeouts in relief.

Roob lined a leadoff double and later scored by beating the throw to the plate on Junker's RBI fielder's choice in the Hastings' sixth. Chirpich walked and later crossed the plate when Ruen's comebacker was thrown away at second base in the home half of the sixth.

Roob and Pottinger produced an RBI single and a sacrifice fly, respectively, to generate two insurance runs for Post 1210 during the top of the seventh.

Pottinger worked a 1-2-3 bottom of the seventh to earn the save for Hastings. Pottinger gave up one unearned run on one hit, fanned four and walked two in closing the final 2 2/3 innings.

Donahoe notched the victory by giving up two runs - one earned - on five hits, struck out three, walked five and hit one batter in 4 1/3 innings.



Fairmont VFW POost 1222 runner Cole Emler (left) and Hastings Post catcher Deron Reissner await the umpire's call on a close play at the plate during Thursday's first-round 2nd District baseball game at Johnson Park in New Ulm. Emler was ruled safe on the play

Photo by Charlie Sorrells

Game Two

Ruen allowed seven runs on 11 hits, walked five, hit one batter and struck out four in seven innings of work.

Emler went 2-for-4 to top Post 1222.

HST 003 011 2 - 7 11 2

FMT 000 111 0 - 3 6 1

Mitch Donahoe (WP), Drew Pottinger (5, Sv) and Devon Reissner. Jay Ruen (LP) and Ben Abel.

LOB-Fairmont 11; Hastings 9. 2B-Reissner (H) and Thomas Roob (H). 3B-D. Pottinger (H) and Cody Marek (H). SF-D. Pottinger (H). SAC-Reissner (H).



VFW Gold squeaks by

By Jim Bastian, Journal Sports Writer, posted July 26, 2012

NEW ULM - New Ulm VFW Gold's Chase Meyer may well have taken both Jackson Yackley and Wyatt Peterson out for pizza following their Second District VFW game Thursday night against Farmington.

Yackley and Peterson both gunned down Farmington baserunners at the plate in the first and seventh innings, respectively, as New Ulm squeaked by Post 7662 by a score of 1-0.

Meyer allowed three hits and struck out two in getting the win.

New Ulm VFW Gold's Chase Meyer pitched a first game shut-out against Farmington in the 2nd District VFW playoffs Thursday.

Journal photo by Steve Muscaello

Farmington's J.D. Hinks was just as dominant. He scattered three hits and fanned four. The only run that he allowed came without the aid of a hit.

"Chase threw the ball really well tonight," New Ulm coach Dave Shoen said.

"He threw well last Sunday - he pitched five perfect innings. He is the kind of player that you want to give the ball to and let him get after it a little bit and get us out on the right foot."

But it appeared that Farmington was going to get out on the right foot against Meyer.

Game Four

Jordan Decrook belted Meyer's first pitch of the game for a lead-off double to left field. He took third on a Ryan Geibel sacrifice bunt. Meyer plunked Bobby Eckert to put runners on first and third. Nick Schoening followed with a fly ball to short left field that was caught by Yackley. Decrook tagged and tried to score, but was gunned down on a perfect throw from Yackley to catcher Grant Kannegiesser for an inning-ending double play.

Farmington didn't threaten again until the top of the seventh, when Meyer again got a little help from his friends.

Schoening drew a lead-off walk and swiped second with one out. Landon Nielson coaxed a walk before Tyler VanWinkle slapped a base hit to center field. Schoening tried to score from second on the play, but Peterson's throw from center field to Kannegiesser easily nailed him at home for the second out. Meyer then got Buck Lester to ground out to end the game.

"We had two big on-target throws from our outfielders," Shoen said. "They were big plays."

The only run of the game came in the first when Judd Davis, who later left with an ankle injury, and Brach Kraus both walked. A sacrifice bunt by Meyer and a Yackley ground out scored Davis.

Dassel ends Fairmont VFW's season

July 28, 2012

NEW ULM - Matt Lytle pitched nine stellar innings and delivered the eventual game-winning run during a five-run top of the 10th inning to steer Fairmont VFW Post 1222 to a one-run marathon playoff victory over Sleepy Eye Post 800 on Friday in New Ulm.

Lytle allowed only one run while scattering eight hits on the mound, and singled home Fairmont's final two runs from the batter's box to pace a 6-5 extra-inning 2nd District Tournament elimination-game victory at Mueller Park.

Dassel Post 906, however, ended Fairmont's postseason baseball run by producing an 8-0 victory over Post 1222 during Friday's second elimination game back at Mueller Park.

Dassel starting pitcher Tom Halonen hurled a two-hit complete-game shutout on the strength of eight strikeouts and four walks in seven innings of work.

Josh Eversman and Nate Johnson collected Post 1222's only hits against Post 906.

Dassel advances to face Hastings Post 1210 - an 8-6 winner over Hutchinson - at 4 p.m. today at Johnson Park in New Ulm in yet another elimination game.

Fairmont ended its season with a 16-13 record.

"I thought Matt (Lytle) pitched an outstanding game for us in today's first game," said Post 1222 mentor Todd Sukalski.

Ironically, Sukalski had originally planned for Lytle to work seven innings, but the right-hander's pitching arm felt good enough to hurl the eighth and ninth frames, keeping Fairmont in the 1-all pitcher's duel.

Lytle and Sleepy Eye right-hander Jon Kopacek held their opposing offenses in check before Post 1222 capitalized on Post 800's costly error with two out in the top of the 10th.

Spencer Chirpich hit a grounder between the first baseman's legs before Luke Becker singled and Jay Ruen walked to load the bases for Fairmont. Josh Eversman drilled a pivotal two-run single to left to snap the 1-all tie before Trason Arens drew a walk to end Kopacek's pitching stint.

Sleepy Eye reliever John Mangen issued a bases-loaded walk to Ben Abel before Lytle blooped a key two-run single into left field to stake Post 1222 to a 6-1 edge entering the last of the 10th.

Sleepy Eye leadoff batter Brandon Helget, however, collected his third hit of the game - a leadoff single - before Fairmont reliever Nate Johnson issued walks to Dylan Owens and Lucas Heiderscheidt to load the bases.

Johnson got a shallow flyout, but Kopacek and Matt Berkner followed with RBI singles to narrow Post 800's gap to 6-3 and caused Sukalski to bring Luke Becker to the hill with a 2-0 count on Sam Hirschboeck. Becker completed the bases-loaded walk before allowing Carter Krzmarzick's RBI groundout as Sleepy Eye inched within 6-5.

Becker, however, got a flyout to right fielder Parker Monsen to preserve the one-run playoff victory. Becker earned the save for Lytle, who recorded three strikeouts and issued two walks in nine innings of work to notch the victory.

Kopacek allowed six runs - only one earned - on 10 hits, struck out six and walked four in 9 2/3 innings of work to take the loss.

Abel went 3-for-4 with one RBI to top Fairmont's 11-hit effort, Trason Arens went 2-for-4 and scored a pair of runs, while Chirpich contributed a double.

Bailey Koppen produced Post 1222's solo run in the fourth with an RBI single that plated Arens, who had singled and reached second on Abel's infield hit.

Brandon Helget and Kopacek each produced three hits to top Sleepy Eye's 11-hit effort, with Helget doubling and Kopacek driving in a run. Berkner contributed a 2-for-5 performance including a double and one RBI, while Heiderscheidt chipped in a sacrifice fly and a sacrifice bunt.

(Game 1)

FMT 000 100 000 5 - 6 11 1

SE 000 010 000 4 - 5 11 1

Matt Lytle (WP), Nate Johnson (10), Luke Becker (10, Sv) and Ben Abel. Jon Kopacek (LP), John Mangen (10) and Mike Hirsch.

LOB-Fairmont 8; Sleepy Eye 11. 2B-Brandon Helget (SE), Matt Berkner (SE), Spencer Chirpich (F). SF-Lucas Heiderscheidt (SE). SAC-Heiderscheidt (SE).

(Game 2)

FMT 000 000 0 - 0 2 5

DAS 020 420 x - 8 11 1

Josh Eversman (LP), Parker Monsen (5) and Ben Abel. Tom Halonen (WP) and Garrett Lueders.

Sleepy Eye slips by Fairmont

July 28, 2012

FAIRMONT - Fairmont American Legion Post 36 put together a four-run rally in the home half of the sixth inning against Sleepy Eye Post 7 in a second-round Division I, 2nd District baseball tournament game at Herb Wolf Field on Friday night.

Post 7 held off Post 36 and managed to scrape out two runs in the top of the eighth to win the game, 7-6, to advance to Sunday's 1 p.m. championship game back in Fairmont.

Fairmont (8-4) plays the winner of New Ulm Gold and Worthington at 4 p.m. today. New Ulm Gold and Worthington play at 1 p.m. in an elimination game.

Sleepy Eye took a 4-1 lead after five innings. Fairmont starter Jordan Voss gave up a walk to Sleepy Eye's Josh Kopacek to start Post 7's rally in the third.

A single by Joe Meyer moved Kopacek to second base and he scored on a single to left field by Sean Mathiowetz.

Sleepy Eye added to its lead in the fourth when Jordan Anderson reached on an error and took second when Kyle Krzmarzick was hit by a pitch.

A walk to Meyer loaded the bases and another Fairmont error allowed Sleepy Eye to score its second run of the game.

Fairmont had six errors in the game, and its fourth miscue allowed Scott Salfer to reach in the fifth. Salfer scored on a single by Jordan Anderson after reaching second on a hit by Nolan Helget.

"I thought our pitchers did well today. They were getting batters to hit into plays that should've been outs. Our defense was a bit shaky at times," said Fairmont coach Scott Chirpich.

Fairmont's bats came alive in the fifth inning and they managed to scrape out one run. Andy Reiter led off with a hit for Post 36 and Luke Becker's sacrifice bunt moved him to second.

Jon Ellis reached on a mishandled ball by the Sleepy Eye shortstop and moved Reiter to third.

Spencer Chirpich hit a shot through the right side of the infield to score Reiter to make it 4-1.

Fairmont kept the offense going in the sixth when Ryan Noll pounded a hit up the middle to lead off. Mitch Pffingsten singled to left field and Jay Ruen drew a walk to load the bases.

A wild pitch scored Noll from third and Reiter delivered a hit on a low pitch down the left-field line to score Pffingsten for the second run of the inning. Luke Becker scored Ruen from third with a bloop single.

Ellis gave Fairmont a 5-4 lead and collected an RBI on a single to score Reiter from second base to cap the scoring effort in the sixth.

Sleepy Eye took the lead back in the eighth with three runs on two hits to make it 7-5.

Fairmont came back and scored in the eighth to make it a one-run game. Ellis led the way with a double to left-center, and scored on Levi Becker's double down the left-field line.

Max Waletich, who pitched the final two innings of relief, held Sleepy Eye scoreless in the top of the ninth and gave Fairmont a chance to take the win.

"We had a rally going in the ninth, but it wasn't enough," said Chirpich.

Jordan Voss got the start for Fairmont, pitching 4 1/3 innings and allowing four runs - two earned - on seven hits while walking three and striking out one.

Levi Becker came in for relief in the fifth and pitched 2 2/3 innings, allowing two hits with two walks.

Waletich took the loss in his two innings of relief, allowing three runs on four hits, striking out two and walking two.

Mathiowetz pitched 7 2/3 innings for Sleepy Eye to earn the win, giving up six runs on 13 hits, striking out five and walking four.

Adam Sellner earned the save, only allowing two hits in 1 1/3 innings.

Pfingsten went 3-for-4 with a run scored to lead the offensive effort.

SE 001 120 030 - 7 10 3

Fmt 000 014 010 - 6 15 6

Sean Mathiowetz (WP), Adam Sellner (8, Sv) and Josh Kopacek. Jordan Voss, Levi Becker (5), Max Waletich (8, LP) and Andy Reiter.

2B-Jon Ellis (F), Levi Becker (F), Kyle Krzmarzick (SE) and Joe Meyer (SE).

