

A's gamble pays off

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By Joe Brown , Marshall Independent

The loss is the third in as many playoff games for New Ulm amateur teams in 2011 and a likely first loss ever for the Brewers in Class B baseball. Due to players moving from the Kaiserhoff, the state moved the Brewers into lass B.

MARSHALL - It was a calculated risk, but one that paid off in the end for the Marshall A's.

In a Section 2-B play-in game against the New Ulm Brewers at home on Friday, Marshall saved its ace, Nate Dickhausen, in case the A's advanced, putting Brandon Wilhelmi on the mound against the Brewers. And thanks to some timely hitting and four double plays in the game, Marshall held off a late charge by New Ulm to advance in the section playoffs with a 7-5 victory.

Getting the win on the mound, Wilhelmi went six innings, striking out one and giving up two hits through the first four innings. After Jordon Kontz came in relief, Wilhelmi played at catcher, and later moved to the outfield.

"I can't say enough about his performance (on Friday)," A's manager Sean Culhane said of Wilhelmi. "I asked him earlier in the day if he could throw, and he wanted the ball. He was efficient out there and that's going to help us with Austin this weekend."

Scoreless through the first three innings, Wilhelmi helped his own cause in the bottom of the fourth with a two-run RBI single, bringing in Andrew Kinney. At the plate, Wilhelmi went 3-for-4 with three RBIs.

After New Ulm tied the game in the fifth with a Brock Sieve double, one crack of the bat by Chace Pollock put the A's up by three as the shortstop belted a three-run home run over left-center field. Pollock also had a triple in the game, finishing 2-for-5 with two runs scored.

"He's our catalyst. If there was a 'C' for our team, it's Chase," Culhane said. "He's been through every battle. He's a gamer, and if we can get him hot in the playoffs, that's all we need."

New Ulm was deflated after the home run, but not defeated. With two outs in the sixth, designated hitter Chris Peters nailed a two-run double to close the deficit to one and forcing Marshall to go to its bullpen in the seventh, something the team was hoping to avoid.

"They hit the ball well against us and did a good job of putting it in play," Culhane said.

Starting with a leadoff triple by Pollock, Marshall put up three runs in the seventh. After Pollock's hit, Kontz brought him home with a single, and with two outs, Wilhelmi brought in Kontz and Tyler Flattum with a two-run single.

Down 7-3, the Brewers turned it into a two-run game after a three-hit, two-run eighth inning. Coming in relief, Dickhausen stopped the bleeding. Although Culhane's goal was to keep him out of Friday's game, Dickhausen was effective in two innings of relief, picking up the save.

"He'll be fine (for the weekend)," Culhane said. "We should have enough pitching to get through the weekend with guys like Jared Pick and Ben Bartling back."

"Baseball's not always pretty, but we battled hard (on Friday)," Culhane said. "I'm really proud of how we played, we did extremely well in all facets of the game, especially on defense."

NU000 012 020-5 12 2

M000 130 30x-7 13 2

NU-Cory Ranweiler, Bob Wellman (6), Zack More (8); M-Brandon Wilhelmi, Jordon Kontz (7), Nate Dickhausen (8). WP-Wilhelmi. LP-Ranweiler. S-Dickhausen. HR: M-Chace Pollock. 3B: M-Pollock. 2B: NU-Wade French 2, Landon Rewitzer, Brock Sieve, Chris Peters; M-Kontz. LOB: NU-5; M-7.