

Cats One 'Wet Ball' Away

Mulvane is a "wet ball" away from beginning the 1991 prep baseball season in spectacular fashion.

The MHS Wildcats swept a doubleheader from Circle Monday, April 1, giving Mulvane High its first varsity boys victories of the year. The Cat football and boys basketball teams both were winless.

Coach David Katzenmeier's baseballers changed all that Monday at Circle when they horse their way past the Thunderbirds, 12-2, in the opening game, then whipped Circle, 18-7, in the nightcap.

Mulvane opened the season at the Mulvane sports complex Thursday, March 28, with approximately 100 spectators on hand for the official opening and throwing of the first ball at the complex. Mayor Rick Ebersole threw a high and wide ball to catcher Chuck Rollins on the ceremonial pitch. The Cats then battled two-time 4A state champion Nickerson before bowing, 3-2, in a rainy first game. The second game was postponed by wet grounds.

An overthrow at third base from the outfield enabled Nickerson to score a run and put a runner at third base in the two-run 2nd inning which proved to be the key inning.

"We were just a slick ball away from winning it," said Katzenmeier. "We had a costly error on the throw and (pitcher Jarrod) Oldridge slipped on wet ground when he tried to back the play up. The thing to remember, though, was they had the same wet conditions and won it.

"I can't feel too badly about it, though. It was a pitching duel and overall, we played well. You have young men on the field and they challenged Nickerson pretty well."

The junior righthander Oldridge gave up only two hits against Nickerson, but settled down after the 2nd inning uprising, striking out five of the next six batters. He finished with 11 strikeouts but walked seven, including two in the fateful second and the player who scored with the winning run in the top of the last inning, snapping a 2-2 tie.

The Wildcats, meanwhile threatened in the 4th, 5th and 6th innings but scored only one run.

Larry Dixon scored in the first inning when he walked, took second on Robert

First Game
 Mulvane 002 044 2—12 15
 Circle 100 100 0—2 4
 Jarrod Oldridge and Chuck Rollins; Scott Swan and Bardin.

HR—Larry Dixon (M).
Second Game
 Mulvane 265 32—18 9
 Circle 112 12—7 8
 Jamie Belden and Chuck Rollins; Cassidy and Thompson.

First Game
 Nickerson 020 000 1—3 2
 Mulvane 100 010—2 2
 Bradford, Nehr 7, and Worley; Jarrod Oldridge and Chuck Rollins.

Second Game
 Postponed by rain after one inning



Mulvane's Larry Dixon motors around third on the way to score against Nickerson in opener

Glaser's ground out and scored on Chuck Rollins' RBI double. Mulvane's only other run against the Panthers came in the 4th when Oldridge walked, as did Gary Cleverdon. Oldridge went to third on an error and scored when David Boyer plugged a single to rightfield.

The bats came alive against Circle as Mulvane rapped out 15 hits in the opener to support another fine effort by Oldridge, who gave up four hits (three of them in the opening frame) and fanned 12. In the nightcap, freshman Jamie Belden made a highly successful debut as he mowed down the T-Birds on eight hits, but he had ample help from the Cat batsmen who cracked nine hits.

There was plenty for the veteran coach Katzenmeier to be pleased with after visiting Circle. "I was a little apprehensive going into the games but felt much better afterwards," said Katzenmeier. "We played much better games as far as being aggressive and hitting the ball. We still made a few mistakes, but those are things that can get ironed out during the season. I know I saw some pretty big smiles on the faces of some of the kids. They deserve it. They have worked hard all year."

Katzenmeier said Mulvane did a much better job swinging the bats against Circle, but noted the Nickerson pitching was superior, too. "It was enjoyable," said Katzenmeier.

"We definitely came out swinging the bats," added the Cat coach. "We had a talk after the Nickerson game and the kids came out swinging."

He also was extremely pleased with the righthander Belden as a No. 2 starter behind the veteran Oldridge. A second pitcher was one of the big question marks coming into the season.

Centerfielder Larry Dixon had a monster of a doubleheader. He scored three times and went 3-for-4 in the opener, including a solo homer in the 6th. He scored four more times in the nightcap after reaching base all five trips to the plate. Another sophomore, Robert Glaser, went 4-for-5 in the opener and had two more hits and three runs in the second game.

"Those two had big games," admitted Katzenmeier.

The Wildcats fell behind, 1-0 in the first game but came back with two in the third, four in the 5th and four more in the 6th to take charge. Glaser singled to start the 5th and scored on Chuck Rollins' double. Oldridge doubled in a run and Gary Cleverdon singled for another run. Steve Nelson singled in the final run of the inning.

Dixon started the 6th with a homer and Rollins kept things going with a single. Oldridge singled, too, and Cleverdon walked to fill the bases. One run scored on a wild pitch before a second scored on David Boyer's ground out. Nelson then singled to score the final run.

The second game was a Mulvane track meet. The big blow came in the six-run 2nd which gave the Cats a 8-2 lead when Cleverdon emptied the sacks with a three-run double, scoring Glaser and Rollins, who had singled and Oldridge, who had walked. Boyer's fly ball scored the last run. Rollins had two RBIs on his single.

Oldridge's two-run triple and an RBI hit by Cleverdon keyed a three-run 4th and Daniel Myears and Dixon scored in the 4th to run-rule the T-Birds.

Buhler will be in Mulvane today (April 4) for a Chisholm Trail League doubleheader beginning at 4 p.m. at the Mulvane sports complex.