

Cat Hopes Up In Smoke

MANHATTAN—Mulvane ran out of magic. The mirrors all broke. The smoke blew south. And the Wildcats became human. There wasn't any more "May Magic" for Mulvane Friday, May 28, in the opening

game of the Class 4A State Baseball Tournament at Frank Myers Field on the K-State campus.

Chisholm Trail League sister, Nickerson, rushed to the 4A state championship

Saturday, May 29, when the Panthers crushed Scott City, 9-0, for the championship.

Earlier, Baxter Springs squeaked past Parsons, 10-9, for third place. In semifinals, Nickerson nosed out Parsons, 3-1, and Scott City clipped Baxter Springs, 4-3.

"We just ran out of pitching, that was the secret," stressed David Katzenmeier, the Mulvane High School baseball coach who had his Cats believing they could tame the Atlanta Braves. But when the dust settled after the first-round game against Baxter Springs, it was the Lions who were marching on.

Mulvane marched home.

Baxter, trying for its third consecutive 4A state crown, rallied from a 6-0 start by the Wildcats to bang Mulvane around by the count of 17-9. In other first-round games, Scott City snorted past Paola, 7-6, Nickerson bopped Bonner Springs, 10-4, and Parsons subdued Topeka Hayden, 8-5.

"Offensively, we did exactly what we wanted to do," added Katzenmeier, who saw his Wildcats' season come to a close at 6-17. "We didn't even mind being the visitor. We thought if we could come out and score some runs, we could stun them a little bit, and we did that, but they had too many big bats. They had some good hitters and we just ran out of pitchers."

Baxter Springs tied the game in the second, then regained the lead again after Mulvane had scored once in the fourth to take a 7-6 lead before putting the game away with an eight-run fifth inning rally. Starter Jamie Belden left in the second inning and staff ace, Robert Glaser, who had missed much of the last month of the season with an injury, came in but couldn't "plug the dike."

The Lions flooded past Daniel Myers, Scott Sanchez and Casey Myers in the fifth to wrap it up.

"We knew they could hit the ball, and we would have to score some runs," said Katzenmeier. "We got six in the first, which is what we hoped for. We have been preaching all year that we've got to be more aggressive at the plate, and I think that message finally soaked in. We were a lot better hitting team at the end of the year than we were at the start of the year. What we didn't want to happen was for them to get a few walks and a hit here and there and that's what happened when we got past our top two pitchers."

"Robert wasn't game-ready because of his arm and he wore out. He was tired when we brought him out. He did a good job while he was in there but just ran out of gas."

Mulvane didn't need a jump-start in this one. Playing at 11 a.m. in the opening game of the tournament against the No. 1 seeded Lions, the Wildcats came out swinging. After Tim Richardson walked, Steve Nelson and Glaser both singled. Glaser's hit came after an error moved the runners over. Larry Dixon

CHAMPIONSHIP

Nickerson 9, Scott City 0

THIRD PLACE

Baxter Springs 10, Parsons 9

SEMIFINALS

Nickerson 3, Parsons 1

Scott City 4, Baxter Springs 3

FIRST ROUND

Mulvane 600 111 0—9 11

Baxter Springs 240 380 x—17 14

Jamie Belden, Robert Glaser 2, Daniel Myers 5, Scott Sanchez 5, Casey Myers 5, and Joel Phipps; Orion Roller, Nathan Skye 1, Cory Thiessen 1, Mike Lake 7, and Eric Trease.

HR—David Johnson (BS).

Scott City 7, Paola 6

Nickerson 10, Bonner Springs 4

Parsons 8, Topeka Hayden 5

then walked and two more runners scored when Jay Schlegel slapped a single up the middle. One out later, Schaan Buford singled and Chad Nichols walked to fill the bases. Joel Phipps worked a walk to force in another run and Buford scored on a wild pitch.

"You couldn't have asked for a better start," said Katzenmeier. "We were still ahead (7-6) but they scored three in the bottom of the fourth. We came right back in the top of the fifth and I would say the one play was a big one."

The "one play" the Cat skipper was talking about was a perfect bunt by Nelson with two runners on in the fifth. Phipps had walked on four straight balls and Richardson looped a single to center with no one out. Nelson dropped down the bunt and appeared to beat the throw at first but he was called out. "That was a big, big play because we would have had the bases loaded and no outs," said Katzenmeier. "You never know, that could have given Robert an extra boost and he could have gone another inning or so. If we could have scored five or six before their big rally, we might have been able to take the wind out of their sails."

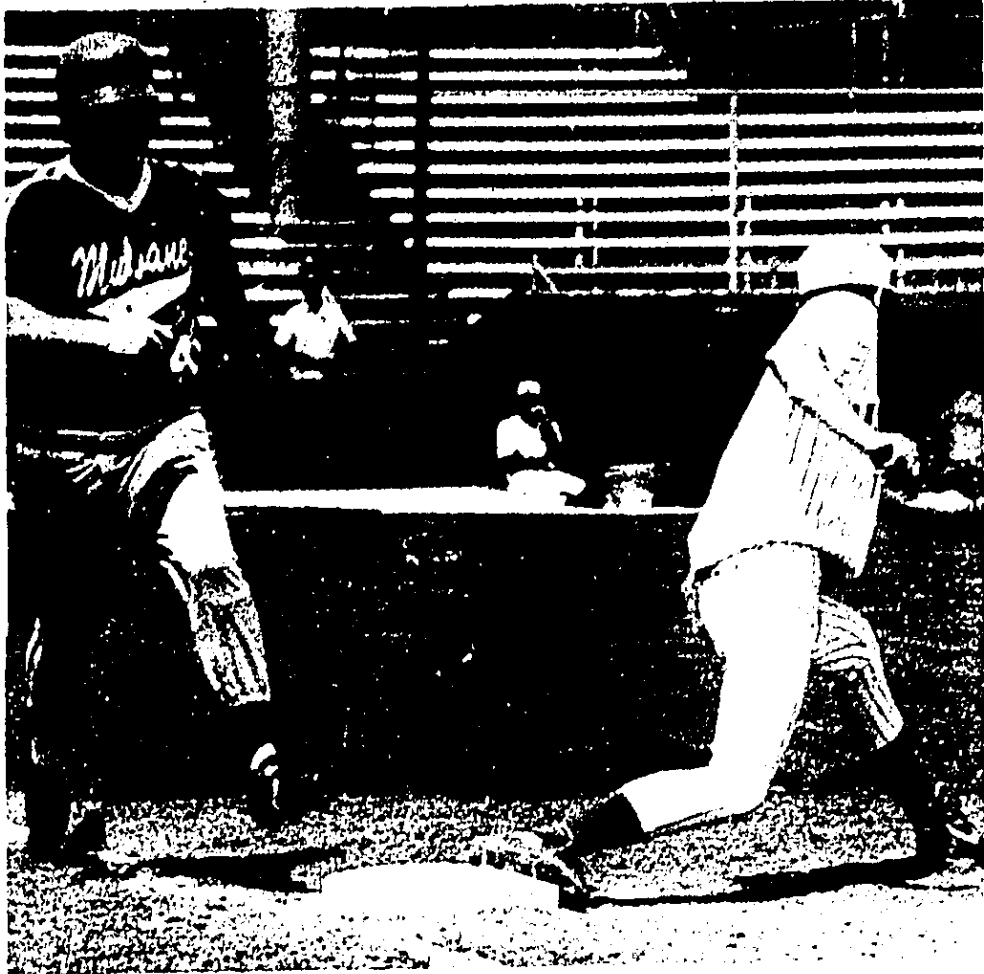
Instead, Glaser grounded out with Phipps scoring the only run of the inning, which left Mulvane still trailing, 9-8. In the bottom of the fifth, the Lions roared, scoring eight times.

"We gave it a valiant effort, and that's all I can ask for," said Katzenmeier. "What happens, happens. If you get that good effort, that's success in my eyes and we did get that good effort. We played well defensively, and we made some good plays, but just not enough of them."

"Defensively, we had a number of great plays. Dixon made a great running catch in the fourth and Richardson made a diving catch in leftfield. Our outfielders were pretty busy."

Mulvane came up with single runs in the fourth, fifth and sixth. Jeremy Kendrick singled and scored on Buford's double in the fourth, and in the sixth, Buford reached on a fielder's choice, advanced on a balk and scored when Richardson laced his third single of the game.

Overall, the Cats hammered out 13 hits, including three each by Richardson and Kendrick and two each by Buford and Nelson.



Wildcat designated hitter Jay Schlegel (40) is a step late at first



"High Fives" fly early as Larry Dixon (7), Daniel Myers (29) and Joel Phipps greet Jeremy Kendrick after scoring in the 4th