



Mulvane runner, Pete Myers (32) breaks away from first during a Cat rally against Wellington in the season opener Monday

MHS Cats Follow Winning Script

It was everything that Mulvane High School baseball coach Zeke Rash had hoped for. There was pitching and fielding and finally hitting.

And in the end, Rash wanted a "hogger." Instead, the Wildcats and Rash had to settle for a split Monday, April 7, in the season opener at home against Wellington. The Cats showed character in the opener, coming back twice and nearly pulling out an overtime thriller. The Crusaders held on, though, for a 5-4 triumph in extra innings, surviving two Mulvane comebacks. In the second game, Mulvane rode a strong pitching game by veteran senior Brian Minks to a 6-2 verdict.

The split left Mulvane at 1-1 for the year and Wellington also left happy, posting their first win of the year for a 1-5 record.

"We probably should have won both games," admitted Rash. "We just didn't have enough offense in game No. 1. It finally caught up with us. We had several near-misses in the seventh inning. We had people on and our kids hit a couple foul balls that could have ended the game if they had been a couple inches the other way. And we had the winning run on base even after they scored three times in the 8th inning, so our kids just didn't give up. They battle all the way in that first one."

They did, indeed. The Crusaders scored in the first. Mulvane came back and tied it in the second. Wellington scored in the fourth, taking a 2-1 lead into the sixth before the Wildcats tied things up with a run on a walk to Darrin Erbert and Chad Gerwick's RBI double. And even after Wellington scored three times in the first extra inning, Mulvane tried to make things even.

Mike Johnson drilled a triple to dead centerfield to start the inning. Erbert followed with an RBI single, then scored moments later on an error. After two outs, Bryce Schumacher kept things going with a single and Pete Myers walked, but that's where the rally ended.

The loss spoiled a great pitching effort



Varsity Baseball

FIRST GAME

Wellington	100 100 03—5 11
Mulvane	010 001 02—4 8

Scott Yessin, Fagan 8, and Nance; Ryan Rogers, Pete Myers 6, and Matt Phipps.

SECOND GAME

Wellington	100 100 0—2 0
Mulvane	302 001 x—6 8

Ybarra, Metzen 6, and Nance; Brian Minks, Pete Myers 6, and Matt Phipps.
HR—Chad Gerwick (M).

Mulvane at Medicine Lodge, DH, postponed until May 12, 4 p.m.

by junior Ryan Rogers, who was making his first varsity start. He scattered eight hits and didn't walk a batter before giving way to Pete Myers in the 6th.

"Our pitching was real good, our defense was real good, but our offense, wasn't," said Rash. "We didn't do the job. We hung in there and had a chance to win it late. We could have won but didn't, and you can hardly ask for much more than that. It proved to be a good gut check and we responded real well."

In the nightcap, the offense responded as Minks threw zeros at the Crusaders. The visitors failed to get a hit, although Minks walked seven batters. "Minks had a fine game, too," said Rash. "He got to 100 pitches and we decided it was enough and Pete came in and got us out of a tough spot."

The Wildcats came out smoking in the nightcap, bouncing the Wellington starter for three runs in the first frame. Johnson smacked a single and came around on an error and passed ball. Gerwick walked and Minks was hit by a pitch. After Bryce Schumacher walked to load the bases, Myers hit a sacrifice which scored Gerwick and Minks scored on an RBI base knock by catcher Matt Phipps.

Two more runs in the third made it a 5-1 game. Erbert singled to right to start the rally and scored when Gerwick lifted the first pitch over the fence for a home run. Minks and Bryce Schumacher followed with singles but the rally tied on a doubleplay.

That was more than enough for Minks, who struck out nine and had the Crusaders off-balance the whole way.

"We were a lot more aggressive in the second half at the plate," emphasized the MHS skipper. "And Minks looked like we expected him to look. He didn't have any problems and was real comfortable out there."

The good effort against Wellington, a club which came in with four games under its belt, gave Rash reason for feeling a bit better about Mulvane's hopes this season. "Wellington's a tough club, I don't care what their record is," said Rash. "I feel pretty confident with the pitchers we have. Ryan Rogers did a super job. Pete Myers did a great job in relief and Brian did a good job. If we can keep three guys consistent like that, we're going to win some ball games. Overall, I thought our pitchers did a better job of throwing strikes.

"And our defense was really strong, I felt," added Rash. "We had one game in game No. 1 and two in game No. 2. Three errors in a doubleheader is pretty good and I'm really happy with that."

The Cats take on Circle next. The Thunderbirds will be coming to Mulvane today (April 10) for two games, contrary to the original schedule. The game was supposed to be played at Circle but the field there is in bad shape, so the game was moved to Mulvane. The jayvee baseball game will be played at Carver Field as originally scheduled.