

Hornets Sweep Past Wildcats

The Mulvane High School Wildcat baseballers opened their season on the road and in Valley Center. That's normally two strikes against most teams.

The Cats gave Valley all it wanted in the second game after the Hornets came out smokin' in the opener to take an 11-1 victory. Mulvane led much of the second game only to watch a three-run, wind-aided homer sink over the fence in the 6th inning to give the Hornets a 6-5 comeback victory to sweep the series.

"In game one, I wouldn't say we played poorly, but we didn't score any runs and they were putting hits together," stressed MHS Coach Zeke Rash. "I just felt like our kids weren't aware of the things they needed to be aware of. They weren't staying focused on every pitch and that's something you can expect from an inexperienced ball club. On offense, I think the kids found out how important it is to put the ball into play and to not miss signs."

Rash basically has a new line-up at many positions while VC brought back most of their starters and their entire pitching staff.

"We did some things that showed our inexperience in the first game," admitted Rash, "things like the pitcher not checking in when we have people on base or the infielders not checking in on every pitch to see where they should be playing. Our kids just got into the game situations and kind of forgot about all those details until the second game.

In the nightcap, the Wildcats looked like a different team. Senior Garrett Hennes, the righthander Coach Rash is expecting to be the club's ace in the hole, spaced seven hits through five innings and Mulvane was on top, 5-3, but a double, an error, and a home run changed all that and made Valley Center a winner and sent Hennes to first base. Nathan Gunter finished up without further damage.

"Until that homer, I was really happy with the way the kids came back in the second game, but it was a deflating 6th inning," said Rash. "They have a top-flight team, though."

Critical time for the Cats came in the third inning of the nightcap. They scored three times to take a 5-2 lead but should have put the game away and didn't.

FIRST GAME

Mulvane	000 01 --1 8
Valley Center	124 13-- 11 11

Josh Sears, Nathan Gunter 3, Luke Scott 5, Jeremiah Webb, Nate Gregory, Ivy 5, and Boone
 HR—Nathan Gunter (M), Josh Truman and Saner (VC)

SECOND GAME

Mulvane	203 000 0--5 7
Valley Center	200 103 x--6 10

Garrett Hennes, Nathan Gunter 6, and Jeremiah Webb, Mat George, Ivy 6, and Wilson
 HR—Lutzner and Barbosa (VC)

After an out, Lucas Powell was hit by a pitch. Ryan Tatum whacked a single and Hennes followed with an RBI single. Tatum scored and Hennes advanced on a passed ball and Ryan Dinkel pounded a sac fly to left for the third run. Catcher Jeremiah Webb then walked but Luke Scott's liner to center was snagged on a good defensive play for the final out.

Mulvane had taken an early advantage in the first when Randy Johnson struck out but was safe at first on a passed ball to start the game. After a stolen base, Tatum lined a single to center scoring Johnson and Dinkel brought Tatum to the plate when he doubled.

In the first game, the Wildcats were out of it early as VC took a 4-0 lead after two innings and tacked on three more in the third. Mulvane's long scratch on the scoreboard came in the fifth when Brian McColpin smashed his first career homer over the fence in left-centerfield. Johnson kept things going when he bunted for a single. He was out at second on a fielder's choice but Lucas Powell reached first. Tatum had a single and suddenly it looked like the Wildcats could get back into an 8-0 game with a couple big hits. But it didn't happen and senior Josh Sears, the starter, picked up the loss.

"Our pitching staff actually held up pretty good," said Rash. "Sears, Gunter and Scott pitched well but our defense let them down with a couple of errors at key times. The defense was much better in the second game, though."

The Wildcats will be at home today (April 8) to tangle with Goddard in a pair of games at the Mulvane sports complex. The doubleheader is slated to begin at 4 p.m. Then, Monday, April 12, Wellington will be here for two.