

Wildcats Eye Regional

It wasn't the kind of ending Coach Zeke Rash had in mind, but he's hoping the "storybook ending" will be realized next week.

Augusta held off the Wildcats in both ends of a doubleheader Thursday, May 6, at the Mulvane sports complex. But the Cats didn't go meekly and the Orioles had to hang onto their socks down to the very last out in both games. Augusta won, 5-2, in the first game, then choked off a five-run MHS rally in the bottom of the 7th inning for a 9-8 decision.

That left Coach Rash's Cats at 7-13 for the year and ended the regular season for Mulvane. Rash can only hope the story line

is much brighter next week when Mulvane hosts the Mulvane Class 4A Regional at the complex. The bottom four teams meet at 4:30 and 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 18, with the winners advancing to the semifinal games at 2 and 4:30 p.m. Thursday, May 20. The championship game will be at about 7 p.m. with the winner advancing to the Class 4A State Baseball Championship at Manhattan the next weekend.

As it appears now, Haven (12-8) is the No. 1 seed and Chaparral-Attica (5-8) is the No. 2 seed. Clearwater (5-15) is seeded No. 5 and Wellington (1-17) is the last seed. The other two seeds, Mulvane (7-13) and Nickerson (6-13), won't be determined until Nickerson finishes a 9-9 suspended game against Buhler. If Nickerson loses that game, the Wildcats will be the No. 3 seed and will play Wellington at 7 p.m. Tuesday. If Nickerson wins the game, a coin flip will be needed.

"If we can put a couple three games together, we can get there from here," said Rash. "The kids know that, too, so I think they will get after people. I think the level of competition we've been playing will work to our advantage. We feel like we have a great shot at getting to Manhattan.

"I think we have one of the finest defenses we've put together in quite a few years," added Rash. "We just need to have our pitching and hitting coming together at the right time. I think we'll have Garrett (Hennes) fit enough to pitch but we'll have to see. I know it sure would be fun to get to State."

If they would have pulled at least one game out against Augusta, it might have been easier but late rallies fell short in both games. "I think both games ended the same way," said Rash. "I think Augusta was happy to get out of there with both games because with a little luck, both could have gone the other way."

Especially the second game, which saw the Cats erupt for five runs in the last inning and had the top of the batting order at the plate. "We just kept getting the next guy up

on base and that's what we had to do," said Rash. "One more hit is about all it would have taken."

The Wildcats struggled early in the field, which helped knock starter Luke Scott off the mound in the first inning. "We had a couple errors, we bobbled a doubleplay ball and we had a close play at first base that could have gotten us out of the inning," said Rash. It all added up to the Orioles taking a 4-0 lead in the first frame. Four more in the second made it 8-2 and an uphill climb all the way.

After punching one run across in the 4th when Eric Tatum singled, took second on Randy Johnson's hit and scored when Lucas Powell grounded out, Mulvane made its final run its best run. Jerimiah Webb walked and trotted home when Scott cracked his 5th homer of the year. Hennes followed with a base hit and Tatum did likewise. Johnson

came through with a triple to the fence in centerfield and scored when Brian McColpin singled but Powell ended the game when he grounded into a force out.

In the opener, Augusta's staff pretty much throttled the Wildcat offense, giving up only three hits, but Mulvane made some noise in the 7th. Nathan Gunter was hit by a pitch and Johnson singled. Webb delivered a run when he hit a sac fly to center. McColpin singled to keep it going and after a second out, Tatum walked to fill the sacks before Brian Dinkel hit into a force.

"We didn't hit the ball really well but our pitching and defense kept us right there," emphasized Rash. "We just haven't been consistent at the plate. We've had two or three guys carrying us. I think we can do a better job of being more aggressive at the plate."

MULVANE Sports

First Game

Augusta 101 300 0—5 9
 Mulvane 000 100 1—2 3
 Stephenson and Flores, Derek Boyer, Nathan Gunter 4, and Jerimiah Webb

Second Game

Augusta 440 001 0—9 8
 Mulvane 200 100 5—8 11
 Nachbor, Spalding 7, and Flores; Luke Scott, Nathan Gunter 2, Josh Sears 7, and Jerimiah Webb
 HR—Luke Scott (M)

Mulvane Class 4A Baseball Regional

Tuesday, May 17

FIRST ROUND

Game 1 — Mulvane/Nickerson vs. Clearwater (5-15), 4:30 p.m.

Game 2 — Mulvane/Nickerson vs. Wellington (2-16), 7

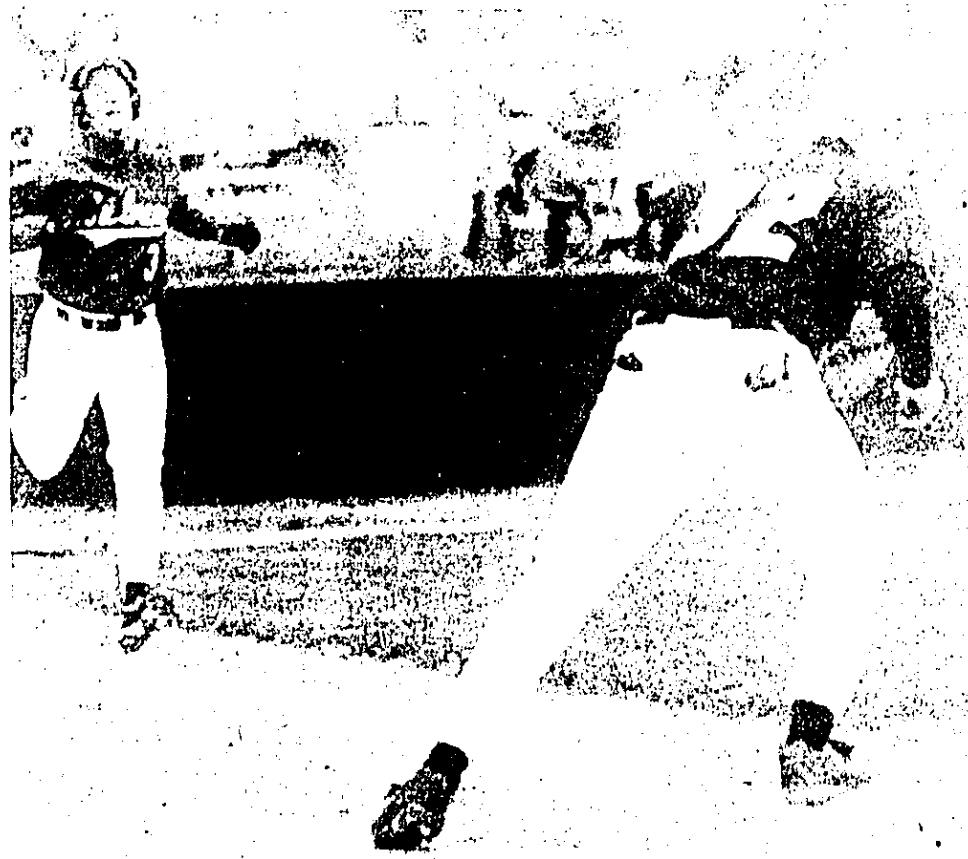
Thursday, May 19

SEMIFINALS

Game 3 — Haven (12-8) vs. winner of game 1, 2 p.m.

Game 4 — Chaparral (5-8) vs. winner of game 2, 4:30

Game 5 (Championship)—winners of games 3 and 4, 7



Ball beats man -- Nathan Gunter loses a race to first base