

Mulvane Baseballers Winless

Late Crusader Homer Leaves Wildcats Empty

The Wellington series could be the turning point of the season for the Mulvane High School baseball Wildcats. Whether that turn is up or down remains to be seen.

The Crusaders squashed the Cats in both ends of a Chisholm Trail League doubleheader Monday, April 10, in Wellington, bombing the Cats for three homers in a 10-0 first game and coming from behind in the nightcap for a 4-3 victory, scoring twice in the bottom of the last inning to snatch victory from defeat.

The losses dropped the Wildcat record to 0-6 overall and left Coach Dave Katzenmeier scratching his head. "We could have turned it around in the second game but we couldn't hang on," said Katzenmeier. "That two-run homer was tough to take. On the positive side, we played a pretty good ball game and were sitting there with a 3-2 lead with three outs to go. We started Pat Myers, our freshman lefthander, and he did a pretty good job. He pitched a tremendous game for us...six innings of pretty good ball. We had a little talk between games and the coaches just laid it on the line. It was gut-check time and I think the kids responded."

Wellington won it and spoiled Myers' "coming out" party with a double followed by a two-run homer which wiped out Mulvane's 3-2 lead.

In the opener, the Crusaders clubbed Mulvane senior Luke Scott for three homers and 11 hits. "They teed off on Luke a little but they have a pretty good team," added Katzenmeier. "We're still not doing much offensively. We couldn't get it going against their pitcher, who was keeping us off balance by changing speeds on us. We did hit the ball hard but they had three double plays. There are two things that have to change to get us going in the right direction. We have to start hitting the ball better and we have to start making plays."

The Wildcats started a six-game road trip in Goddard Thursday, April 6, and the Lions didn't treat the visiting Cats with

FIRST GAME
 Mulvane 000 000-0 2
 Wellington 204 103 x-10 11
 Luke Scott, and Jeremiah Webb; Elliott Ybarra and Alex Haddorn
 HR--Elliott Ybarra, Ryan Elder, Alex Haddorn (W)

SECOND GAME
 Mulvane 001 200 0-3 2
 Wellington 100 100 2-4 8
 Pat Myers, and Jeremiah Webb; Michael Viramontes, Mark Brownlee 4, and Alex Haddorn
 HR--Elliott Ybarra (W)

FIRST GAME
 Mulvane 100 000-1 7
 Goddard 204 104-11 9
 Brian Love, Jared Rice 3, and Jeremiah Webb, Cumbie, Touchatt 5, and Costello
 HR--Blasi (G)

SECOND GAME
 Mulvane 100 00-1 4
 Goddard 800 03-11 10
 Jake Myers, Austin Higinbotham 1, Derek Boyer 5, and Jeremiah Webb, Howard, Craig 5, and Herndon
 HR--Brian Buchanan, Craig (G)

much hospitality, slamming Mulvane in a pair of 11-1 games.

"We actually played better baseball against Goddard than we did in the first games of the season against Valley Center," said Katzenmeier. "I thought without a doubt we played better in this series because we made every routine play. I can't make that statement about our first series. I walked off the field feeling better because we made nearly every routine play. We made only one or two errors but we also made the plays for the most part. In practice since the Valley Center games, we have stressed making the routine plays and that seemed to help."

The Lions pecked away at the Wildcats in the opener. Brian Love started and pitched a couple good innings before Jared Rice relieved in the third. In the nightcap, sophomore Jake Myers started and was bounced out in an eight-run first inning. Another sophomore, Austin Higinbotham, came in and pitched three innings of spotless ball before senior Derek Boyer finished the game.

The Mulvane hitting continued to struggle, although there were some signs of breaking out. Mulvane only had four hits in each game against Goddard.

"We're not hitting like we can," said Katzenmeier. "We're not making good contact. Maybe, we're taking too many pitches, but hitting is a tough art to master. I still think we're looking for confidence. We have only two or three guys who were out there on the varsity field a year ago and the Chisholm Trail has gotten kind of tough."

The senior Scott, one of Katzenmeier's veterans, drove in Derek Nordquist with the only run in the first game when he whacked an RBI double in the opening frame. Both Nordquist and Austin Higinbotham had two singles each. Mulvane's only other hits were a single by Kyle McGuire and a double by Derek Boyer.

The Wildcats had only four hits in the nightcap at Goddard. Jared Rice had a single and a double and Brian Love slapped two singles. Higinbotham scored the only Mulvane run, again in the first. After walking, Higinbotham stole second, took third on a ground out and scored on a passed ball.

Sophomore pitcher Jake Myers wasn't up to the task in the nightcap but Katzenmeier found the bright side of the game. "Coach (Morgan) LeClair has (Jake) Myers in the rotation because of the number of games we have coming up and Jake had been throwing good in practice," said Katzenmeier. "We wanted him to keep the ball low and let us play defense, but you put a sophomore out on the field and it's tough. That first inning was the ball game. We brought Higinbotham in and he had three shutout innings, which was nice, but the trouble was they were shutting us out, too."

The MHS baseballers hope to find their swing when they go to Rose Hill for two games today (April 13). The Rockets are in Division II in the Chisholm Trail League and Mulvane is playing in Division I. The first game starts at 4 p.m.



After a base hit down the line, senior Jared Rice takes a cautious lead off first base at Wellington