

Cats Ready For Regional

The Mulvane High School baseball squad saved its best for the last. But is the best still yet to come?

That's the big question facing MHS head baseball coach Dave Katzenmeier and he's hoping his "yes" is his final answer.

The Wildcats split a pair of games Thursday, May 4, at Augusta but the good news is the Cats whipped up on the Orioles, 15-4, in the second game, and it just happened to be the final game of the regular season. Augusta had a cakewalk in the opener, winning 12-2, as Mulvane was held to only one hit.

The split left Mulvane's boys with a 5-15 record overall as they head into the Douglass Class 4A Regional Tournament Monday, May 15.

"As bad as it was in that first one, it was that good in the second game," emphasized Katzenmeier. "It was our best game of the season. In between games, the main thing I tried to stress was to get aggressive at the plate. Get ticked off and be more assertive. In that second game, the kids came out and really did a good job at the plate. I thought that was the best way to end the regular season heading into the regionals."

Mulvane ripped 15 hits, one of their best outputs offensively this year. "We showed it in the first inning and came out smoking," said Katzenmeier. "We scored six in the first inning and that's not characteristic of this team, but like I have told them all year. Playing good is contagious, and playing poorly is contagious."

Katzenmeier shook up the line-up, too, and the bats started humming the "Star Spangled Banner." Derek Nordquist started the first inning of the second game with a single and Brian Love doubled. Luke Scott slammed a single that scored both runners. After two outs, Jerimiah Webb cracked an RBI double to right-center. Ryan McKnight slapped a single to left for a run and Lance Miller singled. Austin Higinbotham, who was dropped to the bottom of the order, responded with a two-run double, and the rout was on.

Senior Derek Boyer was the recipient of the fireworks and he pitched well with the cushion, giving up only five hits and fanning a pair.

McKnight and Higinbotham finished with three RBIs each. Higinbotham went 3-for-4 and McKnight went 2-for-2. Miller went 3-for-4 with two RBIs and one run scored. Webb had one of his best games, going 3-for-5 with two RBIs and his pinch-runner, Cale Carson, scored all three times on board. Nordquist went 2-for-5, Love went 2-for-5 with two runs scored and Jared Rice was 2-for-4 with two runs and one RBI.

Douglass 4A Regional Baseball Pairings

MONDAY, MAY 15

- Game 1 -- No. 1 seed Circle (12-8), bye
- Game 2 -- No. 5 Mulvane (5-14) at No. 4 Douglass (6-14), 4:30 p.m.
- Game 3 -- No. 7 El Dorado (3-15) or Augusta (5-15) at No. 2 Wellington (11-9), 4:30
- Game 4 -- No. 6 Augusta (5-15) or El Dorado (3-15) at No. 3 Rose Hill (11-9), 4:30

TUESDAY, MAY 16

- Game 5 -- Circle (12-8) vs. winner of game 2, 2 p.m.
- Game 6 -- winners of games 3 and 4, 4:30
- Game 7 (Championship) -- winners of games 5 and 6, 7

FIRST GAME

Mulvane 000 20--2 1
Augusta 034 05--12 12
Pat Myers and Jerimiah Webb, Maier and Flores.
HR—Jared Rice (M), Rickenbaugh (A)

SECOND GAME

Mulvane 620 301 3--15 18
Augusta 021 010 0--4 4
Derek Boyer and Jerimiah Webb, Rickenbaugh, Gilles
3 Heise 7, and Flores

It was certainly a different story in the opener. Mulvane only runs came on a two-run homer by Rice after Scott had been hit by a pitch in the 4th inning.

"All I can say is I think it's a good sign that we ended the year with our best game," said Katzenmeier. "We talked about the movie 'Total Recall' and we want to recall the good points of the one against Augusta and apply it in the next game. If we play like we did against Augusta, who knows. It sure would be nice to be playing at home in the 4A State Tournament." The Class 4A State Tournament will be held at the Mulvane sports complex later this month.

The big problem is getting out of the Douglass Regional. Because official seeding won't be done until Saturday, May 13, these projections are based on "best guesses" and records, which will be used to seed the seven teams at Douglass.

First round games will be played at 4:30 p.m. Monday, May 15, with the team having the highest seeds playing at home.

As of Wednesday morning, six of the seven teams had completed their regular season and Circle appears to have gained the No. 1 seed and a first-round bye. The Thunderbirds are 12-8.

The Wildcats (5-14) look like they are the No. 5 seed and will play at No. 4 seeded Douglass (6-14) in the opening round. Augusta (5-15), seeded 6th, will travel to Rose Hill (11-9), seeded No. 3. El Dorado (3-15) appears to be the No. 7 seed with the worst record and will be on the road at Wellington (11-9), seeded No. 2.

The Mulvane-Douglass winner will play Circle at 2 p.m. Tuesday, May 16, in one semi-final game and the winners of the other two games will play at 4:30. The championship game is scheduled for 7 p.m. at Douglass.