

Late Softball Surge Sparks Hopes

The Mulvane softball girls continued their late-season surge Friday, May 14, by taking another doubleheader from Belle Plaine.

The series was moved to Mulvane because of wet ground at Belle Plaine and Coach Charlie Mason's Cat girls repeated last week's sweep of the Dragons. Mulvane won, 15-4, in the first game and, 17-4, in the nightcap.

The two victories improved Mulvane's record to 6-14 and gave Mulvane the No. 3 seed in the Mulvane Class 4A Regional which will be held Friday, May 21, at the Mulvane sports complex.

Four teams will vie for a state tournament bid Friday when No. 1 seeded Rose Hill (12-4), Douglass (5-13), Bluestem (7-3) and the Wildcats play in the regional. The winner will advance to the first-ever 4A State Tournament to be played in Emporia Friday and Saturday, May 28-29.

The Wildcats will meet Bluestem at 3 p.m. in the opening game of the regional and RH will play Douglass in the second game. The championship will start at 6:30.

"What made me feel good is the way we took them," said Mason. "It took us a little while to get started in our first doubleheader with Belle Plaine, but we jumped right on them Friday. And we continued to do the right things and make the plays."

The Wildcats scored six times in the first inning of the opener. Stephanie Schultz, who had four hits, started the game with a one-strike double. Gemi Spatz reached on an error as Schultz scored. Heather Taylor beat out a grounder and Deva Lewis walked to fill the bases. Marianne Smysor singled for two runs and Lee Cates also had an RBI single. Brooke Hansen's RBI single and another hit by Schultz completed the rally.

Heather Pearman and Cates had three

Mulvane 4A Regional Softball Pairings

Friday, May 21

(At Mulvane sports complex)

3 p.m.—Bluestem (7-3) vs. Mulvane (6-14)

4:45 —Rose Hill (12-4) vs. Douglass (5-13)

6:30 (Championship)— winners of games 1 and 2

hits apiece and Lewis finished with two and had two RBIs. Hansen also finished with two RBIs.

Mulvane used the same big-inning formula to turn game No. 2 into a rout, scoring nine times in the fourth inning to break open a 7-1 game. In that rally, Taylor started things with a single. Hansen walked and both Pearman and Cates reached on errors. One run scored when Smysor walked with the sacks full. Courtney Renfro singled for another run and both Schultz and Spatz slapped RBI singles. Taylor kept things going when she reached on an error and Lewis and Hansen ended the rally with RBI base hits.

Four players finished with two hits each—Schultz, Spatz, Taylor and Renfro.

"Our two pitchers also are starting to get better and better," said Mason. "Laura Butler pitched a fine game in the opener and Pearman looked good in the second game. They are becoming more consistent and keeping the ball in play. As they improve, so have we as a team. Butler, especially, has come a long way this year. She worked hard over the winter and really has done a good job for us."

Mason also liked the idea of getting out of the blocks quickly. The Wildcats scored five times in the second inning of the nightcap before blowing the Dragons away in the fourth.

"It's important to get that big rush," said the Cat coach. "We played them close in the first two game but we didn't let them hang around in this series."

Mason singled out the freshman Cates, who had three hits in game No. 1 and Hansen and Smysor with two big hits, also in the first game. The top of the order did the job in the second game with Schultz, Spatz and Taylor swinging the hot bats.

The two teams also played a pair of junior varsity games, and the Wildcat jayvees swept both games. Mulvane won the opener, 5-2, behind the solid pitching of Jamie Hardison. In the second game, the Cats pounded out a 16-10 winner.

FIRST GAME

Mulvane 202 2-15 15
Belle Plaine 002 0-4 4
Laura Butler and Deva Lewis; Taylor and Crawford.

SECOND GAME

Mulvane 052 91-17 13
Belle Plaine 100 03-4 2
Heather Pearman and Deva Lewis; Jenkins and Crawford.