

Cat Softball Girls' Luck? Still Looking For Some

With a little luck, the Mulvane High School Wildcat softballers could be 3-1 but "Lady Luck" hasn't been wearing Green and White so far this season.

The Wildcat girls, playing much more competitively this season, saw their record dip to 0-4 Thursday and Friday, April 7-8, at Andover as the host Trojans swept a doubleheader with a pair of one-run decisions over a two-day stretch.

Mulvane lost the first game Thursday in extra innings, 9-8, and the teams had to settle the second game the following day because they ran out of daylight after four innings. Andover won the completed game, 5-4.

"We may be 0-4, but we're playing well and we're playing good teams," said Cat coach Charlie Mason. "We're staying right with the good teams and as time goes on, we're going to get some of those breaks we're not getting."

A hit in the sixth or seventh inning of the second game Friday with two runners on would have broken up a tight game in favor of the Wildcats. But it didn't happen.

Instead, the young Cats had to settle for another lesson in self-discipline, and learning how to win the close ones. In their first doubleheader, the Wildcats played well in losing two to Maize, the defending champion of the Chisholm Trail League.

"We played well at Andover except for one inning in the second game," pointed out Mason. "We made three errors in that inning and that allowed five runs. Right now, we're playing so much better than we did a year ago, but we're just not getting the key hit when we need it. In the second game, we had two runners on in the last two innings of a 5-4 game but didn't get the big hit which would have put us ahead."

Youngsters Jamie Wilson and Susan Wenger pitched complete games for the Cats but were tough-luck losers. Wilson, a freshman, yielded nine hits but couldn't stop Andover from tying the game up in the eighth inning after Mulvane had scored two runs in the top of the eighth. That led to Andover pushing across the winning run in the 10th frame.

And Wenger, a sophomore, also pitched well as she spaced five hits in the extended game. "We've been pretty solid for the most part on the mound," said Mason. "Andover has some real good hitters but Wenger and Wilson did a good job shutting their offense off. I have felt all along that these two would do well but our problem has been hitting, and that puts an extra burden on them. They're going to continue to get better, though."

The first game at Andover was a dilly. The Trojans bolted out the door to take a 5-2 lead but the Wildcats came back to take a 6-5 lead with two in the fifth. Andover tied

FIRST GAME

Mulvane	020 220 020 0—8 9
Andover	212 010 020 1—9 11

Jamie Wilson and NiChelle Bruce; Baagall and Stuhlsatz.

SECOND GAME

Mulvane	001 300 0—4 8
Andover	000 500 x—5 7

Susan Wenger and NiChelle Bruce; Martin and Lawrence.

it with a run in the bottom of the fifth and both teams made a bid to win it with two runs in the first extra inning.

MHS scored twice in the fourth on Rachel Taylor's two run single after base hits by Stephanie Schultz and Gemi Spatz to get close, then added two more in the fifth.

Designated hitter Lee Cates walked and stole second. After two outs, Brooke Hansen drilled a single to tie the game at 5-5 before Hansen scored on a base knock by Marianne Smysor.

Things looked good for the Cats in the eighth when Mason's warriors took a two-run lead. Taylor slapped her third straight single and NiChelle Bruce followed with a base hit. After Cates walked to fill the bases, Shannon Reed walked to force in one run. Heather Pearman's shot to right went for an RBI single.

However, the Trojans rallied for two runs in the bottom of the inning to keep the game tied before winning it on three straight hits to start the 10th.

In the suspended game, the Cats took the early lead with a run in the third when Hansen and Bruce both singled. After Schultz walked to load 'em up, Spatz singled in Hansen.

Three more in the fourth inning gave Mulvane a 4-0 lead. Reed started the rally with a single and stole second. Pearman's single scored Reed, and Cates followed singled before Bruce walked to fill the bases. Schultz singled to right to score one run and Spatz rapped a base hit for the third run of the inning.

"We're just a step away from being good," said Mason. "We need to get more aggressive at the plate and we need to, as the old saying goes, hit it where they aren't. At Andover, we seemed to hit it right at somebody. The girls were hitting the ball right on the nose but right at somebody. Those things balance out over the year, though. We'll start finding some holes."

The Wildcats were to have played Rose Hill in a doubleheader Monday, April 11, at the Mulvane sports complex, but that league series was washed out by heavy rains and a tentative date of 9 a.m. Saturday, April 23, has been scheduled. The next series for the girls will be today (April 14) when they travel to Valley Center for two. The first game is scheduled to begin at 4:30 p.m.