

Mulvane Softballers Hang In With RH

Mulvane's Wildcats gave the defending 4A state softball champions from Rose Hill a run for their money in a make-up double-header Saturday, April 23, at the Mulvane sports complex.

But in the end, it was gift-wrapped.

Too many errors spoiled fine pitching efforts by young Cat hurlers Susan Wenger and Jamie Wilson and the Rockets walked away with an 8-1 winner in the first game, and a 4-2 nail-biter in the second contest.

The double loss dropped the Wildcat record to 2-9 for the year heading into two games today (April 28) at Douglass. The games will begin at 4:30 p.m.

Ironically, the RH contest was a rain-out make-up from earlier in the season, but the Cats' series at Augusta Thursday, April 21, and another twinbill Monday, April 25, at home against Circle were both washed out by April showers. Mulvane did get in one game at Augusta and the host Orioles rallied for a 4-3 victory.

Mulvane Coach Charlie Mason said he had hoped for something better against the Rockets, who won the 4A state title in 1993. "I'm pretty disappointed because we had five errors in one game and four in the second game," said Mason. "They should have been a lot closer games. Susan gave up four unearned runs in the first game and Jamie had three unearned runs in the second. We were right there with them except for the defensive letdowns.

"Rose Hill's the state champ, though, and they took advantage of our mistakes and scored runs with those mistakes," added Mason. In a game of defense, Rose Hill won by making the routine plays.

"Lack of timely hitting also is hurting us," emphasized Mason. "That's our biggest problem right now. We're not getting the hitting when we need it. We left nine on base in the first game and, I think, seven in the second game. When you're not getting

the timely hitting, it puts a lot more pressure on your defense and young pitching."

Mason said he hopes his top two hitters coming into the season, Stephanie Schultz and Lee Cates, start finding their swings. "There are just a lot of people, though, who aren't getting the hits lately," added Mason. "Our pitchers did everything they could. For the most part, they did a pretty good job, although I think we lead off three innings walking the first batter and that put us in a hole."

Wenger gave up only seven hits and walked only four. The Wildcats had only four hits. In the nightcap, Wilson spaced four hits but issued five free passes. The Cats had only five hits.

Mulvane's only offense in the opener against Rose Hill's ace, Brandi Nickell, came in the first inning when Schultz singled to start the inning. After a stolen base and two wild pitches, she came in to score.

Mulvane's biggest threats came in the fifth and sixth when they filled the bases but couldn't score—there's that "timely hit" argument.

Meanwhile, the Rockets scored twice in the second, third and fourth innings to pull away.

Things were more interesting in the second game as the MHS girls made a game of it after falling behind, 3-0, in the top of the third. In the bottom of the inning, NiChelle Bruce walked, Gemi Spatz singled and Heather Taylor walked to fill the bases with no outs. Cates flew out, Schultz reached when Bruce was cut down at the plate, but Shannon Reed delivered a two-run single.

Mulvane was held to only two hits the rest of the way and RH tacked on a fifth-inning insurance run that was Rose Hill's only earned run of the game.

At Augusta, Mulvane carried a 3-0 lead into the last of the seventh inning and the Orioles broke loose for four runs to end the game with the help of two errors. Augusta's first two batters reached in infield errors and Wilson then walked the third batter to fill the sacks. A sac fly and two wild pitches scored three runs before a single ended the game, spoiling a nice three-hitter by Wilson.

Mulvane had scored one in the third inning, then two more in the fifth on an RBI single by Heather Pearman and Kendra Grunden's sacrifice.

FIRST GAME

Rose Hill	022 211 0—8 7
Mulvane	100 000 0—1 4

Brandi Nickell and Mandy Scantlin; Susan Wenger and NiChelle Bruce.

SECOND GAME

Rose Hill	201 010 0—4 4
Mulvane	002 000 0—2 5

Wendi Howard and Mandy Scantlin; Jamie Wilson and NiChelle Bruce.