

MHS Softballers Start Year Slowly

It's not the way Charlie Mason wanted to start the season—three losses in the first four games. Oxford helped the Cats limp out of the starting blocks when they thumped the Wildcat girls, 8-2 and 12-4, in a non-league doubleheader Monday, April 3, at the Mulvane sports complex.

In the season opener, the Wildcats played more sharply, splitting two games with Valley Center in a hotly-contested Chisholm Trail League battle.

But it was the 2A Oxford team that set Mulvane on its ear. "Oxford is pretty tough and they jumped on us quickly and we never recovered," said Mason. "They did all those things you need to do to win the ball game and we didn't do any of them. They played good defense and hit the ball."

Oxford also has its entire team back from the 1999 squad that finished second at the 2A State Championship.

The Cats fell behind early with Katie Rose pitching her first varsity game. Oxford rolled out to a 4-0 lead and the Cats were never in it, getting only four hits. Danielle Vanderhoof, who had three of the four Mulvane hits, singled and scored on a

ground out in the 4th and singled and scored on an error in the 6th. That was the offense.

In the nightcap, Oxford pounded Cat veteran Kassie Hargrove for 20 hits and the game was over after three innings and an 8-0 Oxford lead. The Cats finally put points on the board with a four-run 4th when Rose and freshman Melissa Doerfer had RBI singles and Josalyn Marksberry and Jackie McColpin had base hits.

Mulvane played much better in the opening series at home against Valley. "We really played two pretty good ball games, although we had only four hits in each of them," said Mason. "We're just way behind offensively. The girls are not aggressive enough."

Hargrove pitched well in game No. 1, giving up only four runs but the Cats couldn't crack the run column. McColpin went 2-for-3 and Natalie Turner and Hargrove had base hits.

Sara Simpson won the second game by spreading eight hits and giving up only one earned run.

McColpin started the game with a solo home run and veteran Aubrey Benjamin scored to make it 2-0 in the second inning when she singled, went to second on a passed ball, took third on an error and scored on a ground out. Freshman Kayla Linnebur walked to start off the third inning and McColpin's single moved her to third. A ground out by Doerfer brought the runner in for the eventual winning tally. Doerfer walked and scored on Vanderhoof's single in the 6th, and Simpson did the rest, retiring nine of the last 11 hitters.

"Anytime you can get a split with Valley Center, you're doing something," said Mason. "We have a lot of new players and it's going to take time to get things turned around. We just didn't play to our ability against Oxford. We're going to have our ups and downs and hopefully we can gain from those situations."

FIRST GAME

Oxford	400 013 0	8	10
Mulvane	000 101 0	2	4

Wheeler and Alexander; Katie Rose and Danielle Vanderhoof

SECOND GAME

Oxford	413 031 0	12	20
Mulvane	000 400 0	4	8

Wheeler and Schultz; Kassie Hargrove and Danielle Vanderhoof

FIRST GAME

Valley Center	001 021 0	4	12
Mulvane	000 000 0	0	4

Fluker and Millsbaugh; Kassie Hargrove and Danielle Vanderhoof

SECOND GAME

Valley Center	110 000 0	2	8
Mulvane	111 001 X	4	4

Davis and Doty; Sara Simpson and Danielle Vanderhoof
HR--Jackie McColpin (M)