

Breaking 'Habits,' Breaking Hearts

It's a habit MHS softball coach Charlie Mason wants to break. The Wildcat girls took a step in that direction Monday night, April 17, at home when they played probably their best game of the season to snap an eight-game losing string with a 2-1 gem over Clearwater.

In the second game, the two teams went toe-to-toe until the fifth inning when the Wildcats gave up a big inning and the Indians closed things out with a 10-0 triumph.

That left Coach Mason's Cats at 2-9 for the year. And it also was the third consecutive doubleheader to follow the same path: play great ball but lose by one itsy-bitsy run, then give up a big inning in the next game and lose big-time.

At least against Clearwater, the Wildcats held on in the opener as righthander Kassie Hargrove posted her third straight outstanding game. She gave up seven hits and walked one as she went the distance in the 2-1 game. Her last three games have been two losses (3-2 and 2-1) and Monday night's 2-1 win.

"We really played a good first game," testified Mason. "It was probably our best one. Defensively, we made some outstanding plays that saved the ball game for Kassie, and Kassie pitched her third solid game in a row. It's just too bad she has only one victory to show for it. Maybe she's ready to roll and get some good breaks. She is throwing the ball well, she has good velocity and she's keeping the ball low again. That's where it needs to be."

The MHS girls came to play in the opener, especially on defense. Outfielder Josalyn Marksberry made a diving catch in leftfield that took an Indian hit away. Shortstop Melissa Doerfer made a diving catch behind third and Katie Rose at first base snagged a couple of well-hit line drives.

"And we did a good job coming back," added Mason. "They were up, 1-0, and we scored a couple in the third with an RBI single by (Aubrey) Benjamin and Doerfer's RBI ground out."

Hargrove did the rest, facing only two batters over the minimum in the last four innings and walking none.

The second game was a different story, although it reminded Mason of the last two doubleheaders. "We were right there in the second game," said Mason. "We trailed only 1-0 before we had a big inning posted against us. We gave them an extra out with our fielding and it comes back to bite us. We seem to have one bad inning each series and that's all it takes, and right now, we're not hitting the ball with enough authority to overcome a big inning."

The Cats had only one hit in the game, a single in the 3rd inning by Rose. Jackie McColpin reached on an error in the 6th,

FIRST GAME

Clearwater	001 000 0--1 7
Mulvane	002 000 x--2 6
Love and Loger, Kassie Hargrove and Sara Clasen	

SECOND GAME

Clearwater	100 081--10 8
Mulvane	000 000--0 1
McMillen and Loger, Sara Simpson, Katie Rose 5, and Sara Clasen	

FIRST GAME

Mulvane	003 000 0--3 5
Rose Hill	070 010 x--8 6
Sara Simpson and Danielle Vanderhoof, Lindsay Anthis and Jeri Fraipont	

SECOND GAME

Mulvane	000 001 10--2 6
Rose Hill	010 000 11--3 6
Kassie Hargrove and Danielle Vanderhoof, Danielle Beran, Chelsea Stancoff 8, and Jeri Fraipont	

otherwise it would have been a perfect game for the Indian pitcher.

The Wildcats went to Rose Hill Thursday night, April 13, and the Rockets blasted off against the Cats twice, 8-3 and 3-2 in eight innings.

"It was the same thing at Rose Hill," pointed out the Mulvane SB skipper. "We gave up seven runs in the second inning and that was the ball game. Then, in the second game, we go eight innings before a couple of defensive miscues allow them to score the winning run to beat us. You're going to make mistakes but the one that makes the fewest is going to come out on top. That's the way it is, and right now, we're not there defensively. We're getting there. We're making some of the plays defensively, but we're not making them all and that's what it takes."

Mason said he felt it was the inexperience showing through. Only four players had much previous varsity experience. "We have six of our last eight at home, and we need to make up some ground," said Mason.

The opener at RH was over before it started as the Rockets exploded against Cat starter Sara Simpson in the opener for seven hits. Mulvane's only tallies came in the 3rd. Jackie McColpin had a double and a triple. Rose and Marksberry had one hit and scored once and Natalie Turner had a hit and one RBI.

In the second game, Hargrove again was the victim of shoddy fielding. She gave up an unearned run in the 2nd inning on two errors and a hit. The Wildcats tied the score at 1-1 in the 6th when Doerfer bunted for a base hit, went to second on a sac bunt by Turner, took third on catcher Danielle Vanderhoof's third hit of the game and scored on Benjamin's ground out.

Doerfer had a hit that scored Bob Carmichael in the top of the 7th but the Rockets knotted the score once again in the bottom of the inning to set the stage for one extra inning.

The MHS girls will be back on the ball field today (April 20) for two games against Buhler. The games will start at 4:30 p.m. Andover will roll into town Monday night, April 24, for two games starting at 4:30.