



Mulvane's Dani Phillips (23) is late with a tag at third base as Sara McKnight (21) moves in to help on the play

Medicine Just Right For Cat Softballers

It's hard to believe, but it took a big dose of Wellington to make the Mulvane High School softball girls feel better.

Coach Charlie Mason didn't mind the "medicine," either.

The "medicine" was a doubleheader sweep by the MHS girls Monday night, April 9, in a pair of Chisholm Trail League games at the Mulvane sports complex. The Wildcats had started their season by getting burned by two other CTL teams, but Monday was Mulvane's day as the Cats nipped Wellington, 5-4, in the first game and 12-2 in the nightcap.

"They were big wins because we were able to pick off league wins and because Wellington is a regional team," said Mason. The Crusaders and Wildcats will be among the seven schools in the field next month for the Mulvane Class 4A Regional. "Wellington has always given us problems because they always hit the ball well. This time, they were a little short because they lost their top pitcher earlier this year."

Mulvane junior Sara Simpson was once again on her game in the opening contest. She mowed the Crusaders down until after the Cats had built up a 5-0 lead.

"Simpson really dominated the first five innings but we had a couple of errors that led to some earned runs," pointed out Mason. "We have a tendency to let down when we get ahead, but you can't afford to do that against the teams we play. She got it back together and went one-two-three in the last inning to end the game."

Simpson didn't walk a batter and had her best strikeout game, fanning 10.

On offense the Wildcats took advantage of Wellington miscues to score. Dani Phillips started the 4th inning with a double and scored when Danielle Vanderhoof doubled. An error allowed Vanderhoof to score to make it 2-0.

The Cats made it 5-0 in the 5th inning and the rally started with a base knock by Josalyn Marksberry. Kayla Linnebur sacrificed Marksberry to second and she stole third. Two errors allowed Melissa Doerfer and Phillips to reach base, the second error scoring Doerfer. Phillips raced home on another missed play.

Freshman Shayna Duncan made her starting debut in the nightcap a stellar one. She, too, didn't walk a batter and gave up only six hits as she went the distance. "Duncan threw a real good ball game," said Mason. "You really can't say enough about our pitchers in both games. They put it in play and didn't give Wellington anything extra by walking people."

The Wildcats blew open the second game in the 3rd inning, scoring seven times. Linnebur started the rally with a triple and ended it with a double. She finished with a 4-for-4 game with two RBIs and three runs scored. Phillips had a good game, too, going 2-for-3 with two runs scored and an RBI.

After Linnebur tripled, Doerfer brought her in with a sacrifice. Phillips singled in a run and Vanderhoof and Sara Clasen reached base. Duncan singled and scored a run. Vanderhoof scored on a passed ball. Marksberry reached on catcher interference, before Linnebur popped a double for two more RBIs.

The Cats added two more in the 4th with Clasen's RBI hit being featured and ended the game with a pair in the 5th on consecutive hits by Linnebur, Doerfer and Phillips. "We finally put some hits together," said Mason. "We talked scoring a couple runs in the 5th to end the game, then we went out and did just that."

The Wildcats ran hot and cold last week. They looked great Tuesday night, April 3, in a doubleheader at Oxford, taking both ends by a 3-0 and 16-7 count, but they turned out Thursday, April 5, in a CTL game and were off their game as Goddard dropped Mulvane, 10-0, and 9-0, in the Cats' home opener for the 2001 season.

"Oxford won the Class 2A State championship last year but we handled them," said Mason. "Simpson dominated the first game, throwing a two-hitter, and we put together a nice nine-run rally for a comeback win against them in the second game."

Simpson finished with a two-hit shutout and struck out seven to hand Oxford its first loss of the season while walking only one.

The big inning for the Cats came in the 4th when a liner down the line by Sarah Carmichael was the big hit. Sherri Lasiter started the inning by walking and was forced at 2nd by Melissa Doerfer. Katie Rose singled for the game's first run and then scored when Carmichael slammed her triple. The MHS girls made it 3-0 moments later when Kayla Linnebur singled in Carmichael.

"After we got the 3-0 lead, Simpson just took care of business the rest of the way," said Mason.

In the nightcap, the Cats trailed, 7-3, when an offense broke out. Mulvane sent 13 players to the plate and racked up seven hits. Catcher Danielle Vanderhoof started it by walking and Carmichael singled. Lasiter walked to fill the bases and Rose walked, too, on four straight pitches to force in a run. Josalyn Marksberry looped an RBI single to the outfield and Linnebur knocked in three more with a triple, then scored when Doerfer singled. Dani Phillips singled for another run and Sara Clasen's sacrifice made it a 10-7 game. Vanderhoof drove in Clasen with a triple and scored when Carmichael rapped a triple that ended the outburst.

"We just exploded on them," said Mason. "Everybody got into the act. It's like I've been saying, hitting is contagious. Once we started hitting, everybody got into the act."

Mason felt the Wildcat comeback was big from the standpoint that it showed heart. "We could have just as easily laid down and settled for the split but we didn't," said the veteran coach. "We played real solid defense until our bats came alive and that helps keep young teams in games longer. Young teams are always taking one step forward and two steps back."

The uprising gave Dani Phillips the victory, although freshman Shayna Duncan mopped up in the last two innings with two innings of hitless ball.

It was a different story at home Thursday against the defending league champs from Goddard. The Lions pushed their record to 6-0 by sweeping Mulvane off its feet.

"They just out-played us," offered Mason. "We really didn't even show up. They got us back on our heels to start the series and we just stayed there. Once you make a couple mistakes, it is just compounded the rest of the doubleheader."

Goddard pitching blanked Mulvane twice. No scores, no win. The Cats had only one hit in the opener and six in the nightcap.

MULVANE Sports

FIRST GAME

Wellington 000 004 0--4 7
Mulvane 000 230 x--5 6
Lizzie Stocking and Flinn; Sara Simpson and Danielle Vanderhoof.

SECOND GAME

Wellington 010 10--2 6
Mulvane 107 22--12 10
Lizzie Stocking and Flinn; Shayna Duncan and Danielle Vanderhoof.

FIRST GAME

Goddard 201 70--10 10
Mulvane 000 00--0 1
Bennett and A. Phillips; Sara Simpson and Danielle Vanderhoof.

SECOND GAME

Goddard 140 300 1--9 15
Mulvane 000 000 0--0 6
Rising, M. Phillips 6, and A. Phillips; Dani Phillips, Shayna Duncan 5, and Danielle Vanderhoof.

FIRST GAME

Mulvane 000 300 0--3 8
Oxford 000 000 0--0 2
Sara Simpson and Danielle Vanderhoof; Wheeler and Alexander.

SECOND GAME

Mulvane 000 219 4--16 16
Oxford 204 010 0--7 7
Dani Phillips, Shayna Duncan 6, and Danielle Vanderhoof, Ch. Alexander and Ca. Alexander.
HR--Josalyn Marksberry (M); Wiseman (O), 2.