

## Duncan, Tatum Walk 2

# Strengths Pay Off With Opening Sweep

Two weeks ago someone asked Mulvane High School softball coach Charlie Mason about the strengths of this year's Wildcat squad and he replied "pitching and defense."

Those two facets of the game already paid off for Mason as the Wildcats rode their hurling and a solid defense to a season-opening sweep of the Buhler Crusaders Monday night, March 29, in Buhler.

Veteran senior Shayna Duncan mowed down Buhler in the opener on a five-hit, no-walk effort as the Cats won a 5-2 game. In the nightcap, senior Stephanie Tatum had the luxury of 12 hits from her teammates and she won a 14-3 game on a five-hitter.

And the Mulvane defense was solid with only two errors in each contest.

"It was a good way to open, better than expected," stressed Mason. We jumped on them early and held on in the first game, then jumped on them hard a couple of innings in the second game."

The Mulvane pitching simply smothered the Crusader offense in both games.

The four-year veteran Duncan had a shutout going until the final inning in game No. 1. She struck out six and didn't walk a batter as she posted one of her typical gems. She only allowed three base runners until

### FIRST GAME

Mulvane	100 030 1—5 7
Buhler	000 000 2—2 5
Shayna Duncan and Katelyn Carson, Robinson and Sidebottom	

### SECOND GAME

Mulvane	014 601 2—14 12
Buhler	002 001 0—3 5
Stephanie Tatum and Katelyn Carson, Uhrh and Sidebottom	

the final inning.

The Mulvane offense had just enough punch to pull away. The Wildcats scored one time in inning No. 1 when Abby Sorensen started the game with a single and scored when Amy Phillips busted an RBI triple.

And they gave Duncan a four-run cushion when they broke away with three scores in the 5th inning. Outfielder Ashley McKenzie singled and Katelyn Carson tried to sacrifice but reached on an error instead. Whitney Phillips lofted a sac fly that scored McKenzie and Sorensen kept things going with a single. Carson scored on a passed ball while Tatum was in the process of walking and Sorensen scored moments later when Amy Phillips grounded out.

Mulvane's final tally came in the 7th when Tatum tripled with one out and scored on a wild pitch.

The righthander Tatum tamed the

Crusaders in game No. 2 but the Cat bats made it easy for her. Tatum gave up only five hits and walked two batters to notch the victory.

Amy Phillips went 3-for-5 with two runs scored, Duncan got her bat going with a 2-for-5 effort with two RBIs, Sara McKnight was 2-for-4 with two RBIs, Whitney Phillips drove in two runs and Sorensen went 1-for-4 with three runs scored and one RBI.

"Our young people came through, too," noted Mason. "not just our veterans. We needed people to fill some holes and they did. Amy Phillips at shortstop did a great job and so did Whitney Phillips in center-field. And we put a freshman (Devon Redford) on first base when Tatum pitched and she did a good job, too."

The secret, Mason said, was that the Wildcat hurlers were around the plate. Only two walks in a doubleheader is pretty fair country pitching. "You put good pitching with good fielding and you're going to win games," said Mason. "Tatum walked a couple but she kept them off-balance. She was also around the plate, too, and that's where your pitching needs to be."

The Cat softball girls will play their first home games today (April 1) at the Mulvane sports complex. Andale will be here for a doubleheader, the first game starting at 4 p.m.