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With more experience and better skills, CG-B girls now take confidence to the field

Coach Scott Soerens and his Cedar Grove-Belgium High School softball team are having more fun than ever this spring.

Now in their fifth year of the sport, the Rockets don't go into games expecting to lose. Instead, they're planning to win — a product of improved skills and experience.

"It's definitely more fun for me. It's still a lot of the same girls that started as far as the seniors," Soerens said.

"I think it's fun to see them excited that we're not just going to come in and lose. It adds a new excitement."

Although the Rockets have usually had good pitching — with Steph Ruppel as their ace for four years and now sophomore Kasie Feind in the role — improved offense has been the biggest difference in their success.

"I don't think there were many games where we've had nine or 10 hits, and we're pretty much averaging that now," Soerens said.

Cedar Grove-Belgium pulled out an 8-7 win at home April 10, hanging on to edge Sheboygan

Lutheran/Kohler in a Central Lakeshore Conference game.

Lutheran grabbed a 2-1 lead, but the Rockets rallied to go ahead, 8-3, and then survived a late threat.

Freshman Mandy Race relieved Feind and ended the game with one pitch. With runners on first and second and two outs, a liner to senior shortstop Kelly Hubing sealed the win.

Feind allowed seven runs on eight hits, struck out five and walked six.

“She did pretty well for the first six innings and then got kind of tired,” Soerens said.

At the plate, Hubing had a bases-loaded triple with a bomb to right center.

Feind was a home run short of the cycle, Kaylee Juhasz had a triple and double, and Race had two hits.

The Rockets racked up nine hits, including the trio of triples.

“We hit the ball pretty well,” Soerens said.

In a 14-3 road loss to Oostburg last Friday, Cedar Grove-Belgium stayed in contention until a sixth-inning collapse.

The Rockets trailed by only 6-3 before allowing eight runs, which ended the game on the 10-run mercy rule.

“One of those things — dink after dunk and then a big hit. It was just one of those innings where that’s the way the ball bounces,” Soerens said.

Feind walked eight, and the Rockets made some base running errors.

Juhasz had the team’s most impressive hit, a 310-foot home run.

“That’s a long hit in softball,” Soerens said.

Feind was 2-for-3 and reached on an error. Race had two hits, and Paulette Salazar was 1-for-2 with a walk.

The loss left the Rockets at 2-1 overall and 1-1 in league games.

Cedar Grove-Belgium will host Howards Grove at 4:30 p.m. Thursday and play a 4 p.m. doubleheader at Elkhart Lake-Glenbeulah on Friday.

On April 24, the Rockets will play a 4:30 p.m. road game against Sheboygan Lutheran/Kohler.

Image Information: KASIE FIEND delivered a pitch for the Cedar Grove-Belgium softball team during its Central Lakeshore Conference win over Sheboygan Lutheran/Kohler. Photo by Sam Arendt