Narrow losses frustrate Grafton girls at annual Black Hawk Invitational

Close games were not on the side of the Grafton High School softball team last week.

Despite hanging tough in five contests, the Black Hawks had only one win to show for their efforts — a comeback victory over Nicolet on May 10.

Grafton's near-misses culminated with a pair of tough defeats at home Saturday in the annual Black Hawk Invitational.

After losing, 2-1, to Beloit Turner in the semifinals, the Hawks fell to Brookfield Central, 6-4, in the consolation game.

"We put people in the right positions, but couldn't come up with enough timely hits," Grafton coach Ken Hunt said.

"We hung close, but couldn't pull out a win."

Turner, one of the state's top Division 2 teams, improved its record to 19-1 by outlasting the Hawks in a pitchers' duel.

Kelsie Packard allowed only one hit in a complete-game win, striking out 12 batters and walking one.

Amanda Hunt also went the distance for Grafton, giving up just two hits. She had three strikeouts and two walks.

Hunt had the Hawks' lone hit, a single in the sixth.

Turner made a 2-0, first-inning lead hold up. Grafton's lone run came in the second when Sarah Fischer walked, advanced to second base on a wild pitch and came around to score on consecutive passed balls.

Against Central, Grafton were unable to overcome an early deficit despite a late rally.

The Lancers built a 6-2 lead and withstood a comeback by the Hawks in the sixth, when they scored twice.

Hunt tripled to start the rally and scored when Lauren Lennon's bunt was misplayed for an error. Lennon came home when Kate Lennon's bunt was also thrown away, but Grafton was unable to do any further damage.

Kate Lennon led the Hawks with a 2-for-3 effort at the plate and drove in three runs. She had RBI singles in the second and fourth innings.

Central's Carly Sobrilsky was 2-for-3 with two homers and three RBI.

In the tournament title game, Turner defeated Kettle Moraine.

The tournament left Grafton with a 4-10 season record.

Grafton 8, Nicolet 7 (11 innings)

A run-scoring passed ball allowed the Hawks to prevail in a North Shore Conference road battle May 10.

Lauren Lennon walked to start the 11th inning. After moving to second base on a fly out, she was sacrificed to third by Sheena Croatt before racing home.

Grafton held a 6-1 lead in the fourth inning only to have Nicolet fight back. The Knights took a 7-6 lead when they scored five runs in the sixth with the help of an error and two passed balls.

However, the Hawks forced extra innings when they scored once in the seventh on a throwing error.

Lauren Lennon, Croatt and Amber Tanski each had two hits for Grafton. Croatt's hits included a two-run homer in the first.

Homestead 7, Grafton 2

The host Hawks played the first-place Highlanders to a 2-2 deadlock through six innings before faltering in the final frame of an NSC game May 8.

Homestead scored five runs in the seventh, all with two outs. A wild pitch and an error aided the rally.

Taylor Thiede went 2-for-4 for Grafton, scored a run and had an RBI.

This week, the Hawks faced Cedarburg on Monday (see related story) and Whitefish Bay on Tuesday. They will host Milwaukee Lutheran at 4:30 p.m. Thursday and play in the Whitefish Bay Invitational on Saturday.

On May 21, Grafton will wrap up the regular season with a 4:30 p.m. game at Port Washington.

Image Information: A HIGH, INSIDE PITCH had Grafton's Lauren Lennon leaning back during a semifinal game against Beloit Turner in Saturday's Black Hawk Invitational. Turner hung on for a 2-1 victory and went on to win the tournament championship. Photo by Sam Arendt