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Wednesday, 23 May 2012 16:46

Late-season surge carries Grafton softball team to perfect week capped by Whitefish Bay Invite title

After struggling with inconsistency most of this season, the Grafton High School softball team may have turned the corner.

At least that's what the Black Hawks appeared to do last week when they went on a seven-game winning streak, culminating in the Whitefish Bay Invitational title Saturday.

Emily Kabitzke pitched a one-hitter in the championship game as Grafton topped Milwaukee Pius, 4-1, and finished the 10-team tournament unbeaten in four games.

"It was a good week for us. The girls are starting to swing the bats and play well," Hawks coach Ken Hunt said.

Kabitzke, a sophomore, capped her team's busy day with a seven-inning gem. She struck out four, walked three and didn't allow a hit until the bottom of the seventh, when Megan Dooley reached on a bad-hop infield single.

Kabitzke got plenty of offensive support, as the Hawks collected 12 hits and scored in four of the first five innings.

Lauren Lennon put Grafton ahead to stay in the first when she smacked a solo homer over the left-field fence.

After getting a run-scoring single from Beth Kottke in the second inning, the Hawks added runs in the fourth and fifth on a sacrifice fly by Sam Maglio and an RBI single by Kate Lennon, respectively.

Pius scored its run in the sixth with the aid of a walk and error.

“It was a good-hitting game for us. We had runners on base in every inning,” Hunt said.

Grafton’s offense was led by Kate Lennon and Lauren Pericak, who each went 3-for-4. Lauren Lennon was 2-for-3.

Hawks roll to title contest.

On the way to the championship game, Grafton opened with a 12-3 win over Wauwatosa East; blanked Whitefish Bay Dominican, 9-0; and downed Nicolet, 6-2.

Grafton had a nine-hit attack against East in a game called on a time limit after 5-1/2 innings. The Hawks grabbed a 5-0 lead in the first inning and pulled away with a four-run third.

Sheena Croatt and Maglio each had two hits, and Maglio drove in three runs.

Amanda Hunt pitched a complete game for the win. She struck out four and walked one.

Hunt duplicated her effort with a seven-inning performance against Dominican, allowing just three hits. She struck out 11 and walked four.

Grafton broke the game open with a four-run fourth, highlighted by Sarah Fischer’s two-run double. Maglio had a two-run double in the seventh.

Croatt, Kottke and Maglio each finished with two hits.

In the semifinals, the Hawks posted their third win of the season against North Shore Conference foe Nicolet.

The game was scoreless until the fourth, when Grafton collected three runs. The rally was capped by a two-run single by Kabitzke.

The Hawks added a run in the fifth on a wild pitch and two runs in the sixth on a double by Croatt.

Fisher and Kabitzke each finished with two hits.

Kabitzke also pitched a complete game, allowing single runs in the fifth and sixth. She scattered seven hits, struck out nine and walked three.

The tournament improved the Hawks’ season record to 11-10, putting them over the .500 mark

for the first time.

“It was a very long day, but it was worth it,” coach Hunt said.

Grafton 13, Milwaukee Lutheran 3 (6 inn.)

The host Hawks scored four runs in the sixth inning to win a North Shore game on the mercy rule May 17.

Grafton cruised after grabbing an 8-1 lead with a six-run second. During the inning, the Hawks sent 10 batters to the plate and had eight straight hits.

Amanda Hunt had three of Grafton’s 12 hits. Fischer, Kabitzke, Lauren Lennon and Kottke each added two hits.

Kabitzke pitched a complete game for the win. She allowed five hits, struck out four and walked five.

Grafton improved to 7-6 in NSC play.

Cedarburg 12, Port Washington 8

Port held an 8-6 lead but saw the host Bulldogs prevail by scoring six runs in the bottom of the sixth inning of a North Shore contest May 17.

The Pirates jumped ahead, 4-0, with a four-run second only to have Cedarburg answer with six runs in the fourth.

The Bulldogs outhit Port, 14-8.

Leading the Pirates at the plate were Mikayla Hilton and Sam Wagner with two hits apiece. Celia Van Pietersom drove in three runs.

“Cedarburg hung around long enough and then got some big hits,” Port coach Steve Schmidt said. “Our pitchers were struggling all day.”

The loss dropped Port to 6-7 in conference games and 8-7 overall.

Grafton 6, Whitefish Bay 1

The Hawks broke open a 2-1 game by scoring four runs in the sixth on the way to an NSC home win May 15.

Lauren Lennon had a two-run double during the outburst, and Amanda Hunt had an RBI double.

Hunt pitched a five-hitter for a complete-game victory. She struck out nine and walked three.

Germantown 17, Port Washington 3 (6 inn.)

The Pirates couldn’t stay with the first-place Warhawks in a conference game called on the mercy rule May 15.

Germantown collected 15 hits and scored in every inning, including seven runs in the sixth. The Warhawks were aided by eight Port errors in the game.

Taylor Miller, Maggie Schmit and Jill VandeBoom each had two hits for the Pirates.

This week, Grafton and Port faced each other in the regular-season finale for both teams Monday. (See this week's paper for related story)

Image Information: THE HITTING and pitching of Amanda Hunt helped the Grafton softball team win all seven of its games last week, including a 4-0 effort Saturday on the way to the Whitefish Bay Invitational championship. Photo by Sam Arendt