

## Hit-and-run Hawks:

Written by STEVE OSTERMANN  
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### Grafton baseball team pummels St. Francis after struggling at plate in two NSC losses

A hard-hitting attack gave the Grafton High School baseball team some respite last Saturday.



After having its bats quieted in two North Shore Conference losses earlier in the week, the Black Hawks hammered St. Francis, 17-2, in a nonconference win.

Besides collecting 11 hits, host Grafton received nine walks from a trio of pitchers.

“Once we knocked their starter out, St. Francis wasn’t quite as deep,” Grafton coach Brian Durst said.

“We scored in every inning. I liked our approach at the plate.”

The Black Hawks raced to a 4-0 lead in the first inning, tacked on three runs in the second and two runs in the third, and finished with an eight-run fourth.

Leading the offensive surge were 2-for-2 efforts by Will Birch (with four RBI), Al Nennig (three RBI) and Tristan Meyer (two RBI).

Plate work aside, Durst was pleased with his team’s errorless defensive play and its pitching.

Sophomore Nathan Koehler worked the first three innings for the win. He allowed only two hits, struck out five and walked one.

Brad Parsons and Bryce Fisk pitched the final two frames.

“Nate looked very sharp. He definitely put himself into the (starting) rotation,” Durst said.

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“It was tough to pull him out of the game, but we wanted to get a couple other pitchers some work.”

After the first two innings, the Black Hawks substituted freely, Durst noted.

“We gave our starters some rest and moved people around,” he said. “It was nice to see everybody supporting each other and accepting their roles.”

The win improved Grafton’s overall record to 7-4. St. Francis fell to 0-9.

Germantown 5, Grafton 3

The host Black Hawks fell in an NSC pitchers’ duel June 6.

After taking a 1-0 lead in the first inning, Grafton saw Germantown score five unanswered runs.

Although the Black Hawks rallied with single runs in the sixth and seventh, they weren’t able to make it all the way back against starter Ryan Anderson.

Anderson went the distance, scattering six hits, walking one and striking out three. After scoring in the seventh, Grafton had runners on first and third, but Anderson got Nennig to line to center field for the final out.

The loss went to Brett Rasmussen, who worked the first five innings.

“Both starters battled out of jams,” Durst said. “Germantown was just able to take advantage of more scoring opportunities.”

The Black Hawks’ top hitters were Choo Weisflog (3-for-4) and Nate Lukas (2-for-3).

The loss dropped Grafton to 2-4 in the conference. Germantown improved to 3-0.

Slinger 6, Grafton 1

The Black Hawks managed only two hits in a league road loss June 4.

Grafton took a 1-0 lead in the first inning on a RBI single by Weisflog. However, Slinger drew even in its half of the same inning and moved ahead for good with a three-run third.

The Owls added two insurance runs in the fifth.

Grafton hitters struggled to pick up the ball against starting pitcher John Sprayberry and reliever Derek Merkes.

“It was dark and cold out, and we didn’t do much at the plate,” Durst said. “Sprayberry throws hard and has a sharp breaking ball, which made it tough.”

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Fisk started on the mound and took the loss. In 2-1/3 innings, he allowed three earned runs, walked seven and struck out two.

This week, the Hawks will resume conference play with 5:30 p.m. games at home Thursday against Nicolet and on the road Friday against Homestead.

Grafton will then play at Whitefish Bay at 7 p.m. June 17 and host West Bend West at 5:30 p.m. June 18.

The Hawks were originally scheduled to host Ozaukee in a nonconference game Saturday, June 15, but that contest has been postponed.

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Image Information: NATHAN KOEHLER threw three shutout innings to earn the win in Grafton's nonconference victory over St. Francis last Saturday. The sophomore allowed only two hits, struck out five and walked one. Photo by Sam Arendt