

Hawks ride Senior Night win into playoffs

Written by STEVE OSTERMANN
Wednesday, 10 July 2013 14:34

Grafton baseball team overpowers West Bend East to earn share of 6th in NSC

After an up-and-down regular season, the Grafton High School baseball team was itching for an ego boost before entering the WIAA tournament this week.

A 6-1 win over West Bend East in the Black Hawks' North Shore Conference finale last Friday turned the trick nicely.



“Our guys did a great job,” said Grafton coach Brian Durst, whose squad took charge with a combination of timely hits, steady defense and sharp pitching by Nate Lukas.

“It was Senior Night, and we were up for the game. It was definitely good to get a win like this, especially heading into the playoffs.”

Lukas, a junior left-hander, kept East in check with a three-hit, complete-game effort. He struck out two and walked one, with his only mistake coming on a solo homer to Eric Bould in the second inning.

Bould’s blast briefly tied the game at 1-1, but Grafton responded with five unanswered runs.

In the Hawks’ third inning, Brett Rasmussen led off with a triple and scored on a one-out single by Choo Weisflog. After Weisflog advanced to second base on a wild pitch, he came home on Beau Benzschawel’s single to give Grafton a 3-1 lead.

The Hawks tacked on a run in the fifth when Benzschawel walked, reached second base on a

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walk to Lukas and scored on a Tim Grams' single.

In the sixth, Benzschawel capped a big night by cracking a two-run homer after Weisflog drew a two-out walk.

Benzschawel and Grams each went 2-for-3, and Weisflog was 2-for-4.

Durst was pleased with his team's eight-hit attack but also praised Lukas and his team's glove work.

"Nate did a real nice job of keeping their hitters off stride. He moved his pitches around and changed speeds well," Durst said. "He got the first batter out in every inning."

As for the Hawks' errorless defense, Durst noted center fielder Al Nennig had six putouts. "Alex was everywhere tracking down fly balls," he said.

The win left Grafton with an 8-10 conference record, good for a share of sixth place.

The Hawks improved to 13-10 overall heading into a WIAA regional semifinal July 9 against Slinger (see related story).

Germantown 8, Grafton 7 (8 inn.)

A late rally by the conference's first-place team robbed the Hawks of a road win in a makeup game July 3.

Grafton trailed, 5-2, before scoring three runs in the sixth and two runs in the seventh. But Germantown overcame a 7-5 deficit by scoring twice in the seventh, including the tying run on a bases-loaded walk.

In the eighth, Joey Szopinski's RBI single gave the home team a walk-off win against Weisflog, who pitched the final 1-1/3 innings in relief.

"It was a great high school baseball game," Durst said. "We just gave them too many extra bases on some of their hits."

Germantown scored five times in the fifth on four hits, two steals and an error.

In the seventh, Grafton took its final lead when Nennig hit an RBI double, moved to third base on a groundout and scored on a wild pitch.

Nennig was 2-for-3 to lead Grafton.

Szopinski, Blake Fleischman, Scott Johnson and Justin Powalish each had two hits for

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Germantown.

Grafton 8, Nicolet 6

The Hawks stranded 10 runners but managed to secure a road win in a seesaw game July 2.

Grafton trailed, 6-5, before scoring three runs in the sixth.

With one out, Brad Parsons, Weisflog and Benzschawel all singled to load the bases. After a two-out walk to Lukas forced in a run, Grams stroked a two-run double down the left-field line.

Nathan Koehler pitched three relief innings for the win. Weisflog worked the final inning for the save.

Benzschawel, Weisflog and Parsons each had two hits. Benzschawel had four RBI, including a three-run homer in the first inning.

Nennig hit a solo homer in the fifth.

Homestead 4, Grafton 0

Colten Poellinger handcuffed the host Hawks with a two-hitter July 1.

The senior left-hander allowed only singles to Parsons and Weisflog, struck out 11 and walked one.

Homestead got all the scoring it needed on a three-run homer by Jake Erfourth in the first inning.

Lukas pitched a complete game, settling down after Erfourth's blast and allowing only two more Homestead batters to reach until the seventh. Lukas gave up six hits, struck out seven and walked two.

Earlier the same night, Grafton defeated Port Washington, 7-6, to complete a contest suspended June 28 after seven innings due to darkness.

In the bottom of the eighth, Weisflog drew a one-out walk, moved to second base on an errant pickoff throw and scored on a double by Nennig.

Nennig was 4-for-4 with two RBI to lead the Hawks, and Adam Cibulka was 2-for-2 with two walks and an RBI.

Port was led by Kiley Prellwitz, who went 3-for-4. The Pirates got two hits apiece from Alex Huebner, Aaron Brockman and Sam Lepak.

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Lepak drove in three runs.

Image Information: BEAU BENZSCHAWEL was greeted by his teammates at the plate after hitting a two-run homer in Grafton's 6-1 win over West Bend East last Friday. Photo by Sam Arendt