



SPORTS

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Saturday, June 28, 2008

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Tough Enough Menominee finds a way to win in Firecracker opener

By TOM KAESER
Assistant sports editor
tkaeser@eagleherald.com

MARINETTE — An undermanned but resilient Menominee team was in no shape to worry about style points Friday afternoon.

Hanging together with spackle, pine tar and bandages, the Red Wave hung on for an 11-10 win over Manitowoc in the Marinette Firecracker Tournament.

Post 146 played without three starters and has just one of its regular starting pitchers available for the first two days of the tournament.

The two teams combined for 16 walks, including 10 by Menominee pitchers, and nine errors.

Some sparkling defensive plays, the relief pitching of Chris DeWald and Josh Barker, and a stinging 13-hit attack kept the win from slipping away.

"We're going to have to play the same way pretty much the whole weekend," said coach Dave Boye. "We've got quite a few players out."

Dustin Kovar beat out an infield grounder, Jake Pedersen spanked a single to center, Barker ripped an RBI single to center, and Aaron

Woods drew a bases-loaded walk to give Menominee a 2-0 lead in the first inning.

Manitowoc (8-7) parlayed three walks off Pedersen and a two-run single by Brandon Bartels to grab a 3-2 lead in the bottom of the first.

Matt LaCanne parked a solo homer into the pine trees in left in the second. Kovar coaxed the fourth walk off Isaac Smith and Hummel smacked a single to left. Pedersen moved both runners over with a sacrifice and Kovar scored on an infield error to push Menominee to a 4-3 lead.

DeWald came on in relief in the second inning after Pedersen issued a one-out walk. Alex Ouruda hit a screaming liner toward right-center, but second baseman Eric Hummel made a leaping catch of the laser and fired to first to double up the runner.

Nate Spurney opened the Manty third with a single and raced to second on an errant pickoff throw. He scored on Jeff Kirt's fly to deep left to tie the game at 4-4.

The Red Wave (13-7) regained the lead in the fourth when LaCanne reached on an error, moved to second on a Kovar sacrifice, and scored on

an infield error.

Menominee rapped out three hits and took advantage of another Manitowoc error to blow out to an 8-4 lead in the fifth.

Woods stroked a leadoff single to left, and DeWald reached on an error. LaCanne was clutch again with a one-out RBI single past diving third baseman Jeff Krueger. After a force at the plate, Hummel cranked a fastball to the gap in right-center for a two-run double.

"We got it done when it counted," said Hummel, who went 3-for-5 and reached base four times in his first game while wearing glasses.

DeWald had control problems in the bottom of the fifth as two walks, a hit batter and an infield single by Beau Steinke let in a run.

Zach Anderla, who hit the ball hard all game, and Sam Piche drew walks in the sixth and Jordan Rasner poked a two-out RBI single to restore the Red Wave's four-run cushion (9-5).

Manitowoc roared back with three runs in the sixth to chop the lead to a run.

Casey Meyer had the only hit in the inning, which was aided by two errors, including



Matt LaCanne of Menominee gets ready to do a fist-bump with Eric Hummel after hitting a home run in the second inning in Menominee's win over Manitowoc in the Firecracker Tournament. (Color reprints: www.eagleherald.com)

a two-run throwing error.

With its lead down to a run entering the seventh, Menominee strung together singles by Kovar and Hummel and a big two-strike, two-run double to left-center by Pedersen.

Trailing 11-8 and down to its last out, Manitowoc flickered back to life when a single by Dereck Klein and free passes to Meyer and Tyler Wilke loaded the bases. Ouruda didn't get robbed this time as he smoked a two-run single through the box to slice the margin to 11-10. With the tying and lead runners in scoring position, Barker coaxed a game-ending bounce to Hummel at short, who

fired to first to nail down the hard-fought win.

"We picked a bad time to play our worst game," said Manitowoc coach Kevin Stangel, whose team had won seven of its last eight games. "What's the most disturbing is our hitting. We had 10 runs and we should have doubled that."

Rasner, who played left, third base and second base in the game, made a lunging stab of Meyer's scorching liner down the third-baseline to rob him of a double in third inning.

DeWald allowed just two hits and two runs in his 2½ innings of relief, while giving

up two walks. Barker allowed scattered four hits and yielded three walks to earn the win.

"DeWald and Barker both came in and threw very well," said Boye. "(Pedersen, DeWald and Barker) haven't pitched much this year."

LaCanne went 3-for-5 with two RBI and scored three runs, while Kovar added two hits and scored four runs.

"Our offense did what it should be doing all year," Boye explained. "It wasn't just a four-run inning and then nothing."

Wilke, the leadoff man for Manitowoc, drew five walks. Manitowoc had five errors and six hits.

Marinette Powers its way to win

Post 39 excels in all phases of tourney opener

By JODY KORCH
EagleHerald sports editor
jkorch@eagleherald.com

MARINETTE — Marinette Legion beat the Watertown Shockers with its legs, bats, gloves and arms Friday night.

In short, Post 39 made it look easy in an 11-1 Marinette Firecracker Tourney victory at Pedersen Ball Park.

While Ryan Kruse held the Shockers in check with his overpowering pitching, Jordan Powers got under their skin with his amazing display of speed.

"You couldn't ask for a better way to start," Marinette coach Brian Lesandrini said.

Powers hustled out an infield single in the first inning, then lined an RBI single and stole second base in the second. In the fourth, he launched a towering drive to centerfield and blazed his way to a triple. He walked and stole second in the fifth.

His triple looked like a home run when it left the bat, but Powers never slowed down to see.

"I was hoping it was gone, but always hustle," Powers said. "After I rounded first I looked to see if it was gone. I couldn't see, but I just kept running."

Adam Francour was hit by a pitch before Powers' infield hit in the first, and Kruse singled them both home.

In the second, Francour and Powers singled and Taylor Garceau followed with an RBI double to straightaway center.

Marinette missed chances to blow the game open earlier by stranding six baserunners in the first three innings. But Post 39 batted around the order in a five-



Marinette Legion second baseman Jordan Powers slaps a tag on Watertown's Ethan Schular, but Schular stole second successfully in the first inning Friday at Pedersen Ball Park. (Color reprints: www.ehextra.com)

MARINETTE FIRECRACKER TOURNEY

Friday's Games

Game 1 Gladstone 5, Neenah 2
Game 2 Menominee, 11, Manitowoc 10
Game 3 Green Bay Bluejays 12, Marquette 2
Game 4 Marinette 11, Watertown 1

Today's Games

Game 5 Manitowoc vs. Gladstone, 10 a.m., Haase
Game 6 Bluejays vs. Watertown, 11 a.m., Pedersen
Game 7 Marinette vs. Marquette, 12:30 p.m., Haase
Game 8 Neenah vs. Menominee, 1:30 p.m., Pedersen
Game 9 Bluejays vs. Gladstone, 3 p.m., Haase
Game 10 Manitowoc vs. Marquette, 4 p.m., Pedersen
Game 11 Neenah vs. Watertown, 5:30 p.m., Haase
Game 12 Marinette vs. Menominee, 6:30 p.m., Pedersen

Sunday's Games

Game 13 Bluejays vs. Menominee, 10 a.m., Haase Field
Game 14 Manitowoc vs. Watertown, 10:30 a.m., Pedersen
Game 15 Neenah vs. Marquette, 12:30 p.m., Haase
Game 16 Marinette vs. Gladstone, 1 p.m., Pedersen

run fourth.

Powers ignited the rally with his leadoff triple, and he easily beat the throw home on Garceau's fielder's choice. A Brandon Menor walk and Kruse's RBI single chased Brett Jacobson from the mound, and Cody Bezio greeted reliever Ethan Schular

with a base hit. Steve Oman drew a bases-loaded walk, and an errant pickoff attempt allowed two more runs to score.

Powers drew a leadoff walk and stole second in the fifth.

"His walks turn into doubles," Lesandrini said. "You could tell it was in the back of their minds.

You could hear them talking."

Powers also turned a 4-6-3 double play to end the fifth.

Menor hit an RBI double into the left/center gap, and he scored on a wild pitch to end the game by the 10-run rule.

Kruse threw 49 of his 79 pitches for strikes. Schular singled, stole second and scored on a throwing error in the first, but the Shockers managed just two more hits.

"He threw strikes for the most part," according to Lesandrini. "He mixed up his pitches. You throw strikes, your defense seems to get a lot better."

Marinette improved to 11-3, while the Shockers are 1-9.

"All we were doing was having fun," Powers said. "We were playing defense, we were hitting the ball and we had great pitching."

WP — Ryan Kruse 5 IP, 1R, 0ER, 3H, 1W, 5K
LP — Brett Jacobson 3 IP, 8R, 6ER, 7H, 4W, 1K
Leading hitters (Marinette): Jordan Powers 3x3, 3B, RBI; Ryan Kruse 3x4, 3 RBIs; Brandon Menor 1x2, 2B, RBI; (Watertown): Ethan Schular 2x3

Watertown 100 00 — 1
Marinette 220 52 — 11

Gladstone, Jays win openers

MARINETTE — J.J. Beauchamp scattered seven hits and struck out five as Gladstone opened the Marinette Firecracker Tournament with a 5-2 win over Neenah Friday afternoon.

Kevin Thompson had an RBI double in the first inning and Andy Lauscher had an RBI single to give the Indians a 2-0 lead.

Aaron Frazier and Lauscher belted doubles in the fifth inning and Bobby Beauchamp had an RBI single as Gladstone padded its lead to 5-1.

Will Fowler had a double for Neenah as it broke the shutout with a run in the fourth inning. Neenah

added a run in the sixth.

Gladstone had eight hits in the win. **Green Bay Bluejays 12, Marquette 2**

The Blues held a 2-0 through the first five innings before Aaron Thompson's three-run homer sparked a five-run uprising in the sixth.

Jeff Lajeuness and Greg Blohowski drilled doubles in the seventh and Jaryd Callendar crushed a two-run homer.

Jeff Thomas stymied the Blues on just four hits.

The Bluejays collected eight of their 11 hits in the final two innings.

Timberjacks kick off second season July 20

MENOMINEE — The M&M Timberjacks open their second season of semi-pro football when they play host to North East Wisconsin Storm in a preseason game July 20 at 4 p.m.

The Timberjacks open the regular season Aug. 2 at Oostburg and play the Summit Stampede in their regular-season home opener Aug. 9.

An intrasquad scrimmage will be held July 11 at 6:30 p.m., probably at the Menominee High School practice field.

All regular-season home games will be played at Spies Field. The preseason games will be played on an area field.

Riding a dream to Milwaukee

Alexander has come a long way from Beijing

By COLIN FLY
AP Sports Writer

MILWAUKEE — Half a world away, Joe Alexander decided he was going to play in the NBA. After all, his older brothers were good basketball players, so they'd probably be there, too.

Alexander was 10, living in Beijing because of his father's work and just a fifth-grader. His brothers' pro dreams changed into business careers, but 11 years later, Alexander is the top pick of the Milwaukee Bucks this summer, selected No. 8 overall.

"This has been a lifelong dream of mine. Well, obviously, I didn't know much about life at the time," he said Friday in his introduction in Milwaukee. "All I knew was my older brothers were really good at basketball and the highest level of ball was the NBA. And I figured they were going to be there so I wanted to be better than them. It was simple as that."

That's been Alexander's biggest asset so far. He's willing to work harder than anyone he's faced. That's what endeared him to West Virginia coach Bob Huggins despite the fact the two only spent one season together.

Huggins saw Alexander's potential immediately and told the 6-foot-8 forward he would play in the NBA one day.

"He said that to me after our first individual workout. I was just throwing down a lot of dunks, not just by myself, but on my teammates and I think he saw that I was really passionate about the game. I wasn't just going through the motions," Alexander said. "I hope that's what he saw."

New Bucks general manager John Hammond and coach Scott Skiles brought Alexander in twice and saw the same thing as they honed in on using the lottery pick on Alexander.

Huggins' influence is apparent on Alexander, who acknowledged that he likes being pushed every day in an effort to be better. It also made his decision much tougher to enter the NBA early instead of returning for his senior season at West Virginia.

"I think anyone who wants to be good at basketball likes to be challenged, and that's what I really thrived on under coach Huggins," Alexander said. "There were a lot of ups and a lot of downs, probably more downs than ups in that process. But the real thing that I enjoy is in the end in spite of all those downs, you come out a better player, so that's why you're able to enjoy it. Despite the yelling and all the running, despite all that, you still come out a better player."

Alexander said Huggins told him Skiles would be similarly demanding in his no-nonsense approach.

"I always feel like I'm supposed to apologize for that," Skiles said. "There's 'tough and a little bit crazy' and then there's 'tough and fair' and hopefully I'm the latter."

Skiles will have an evolving roster to work with. Along with Alexander, the Bucks selected forward Luc Richard Mbah a Moute with the 37th pick and traded for Richard Jefferson.

To get Jefferson, the Bucks gave up last year's No. 6 overall pick Yi Jianlian and Bobby Simmons. The 7-foot Chinese power forward didn't want to come to Milwaukee and his handlers didn't allow the Bucks to watch him when they held a workout in Los Angeles.