

Ratz helps Saints split with City High

Written by Guy Martino
Monday, 18 June 2012 23:41 -

IOWA CITY - Iowa City High did almost everything right Monday evening. They came up with big hits, had solid pitching and made plays on defense.

But all of that went down the drain with one costly mistake: They made Jordan Ratz a little angry.

City High intentionally walked Xavier's Zach Brown in order to face Ratz in the top of the seventh inning with the Saints trailing by one run in the second game of their Mississippi Valley Conference doubleheader.

With the bases loaded, Ratz unleashed on the first pitch he saw and hit a two-run single that helped the Saints defeat the Little Hawks, 5-4, at Mercer Park.

City High took the first game, 8-5.

Ratz was in the on-deck circle taking practice cuts when he witnessed the Little Hawks intentionally send Brown to first. He walked to the plate with conviction.

"I wanted to make them pay," said Ratz, "and also just make the most of the opportunity. I was looking first-pitch fastball all the way. It felt great."

Ratz scorched Little Hawk pitcher Mitch Wieland's first pitch over the first baseman's head down the right field line, scoring Adam Pick and pinch runner Reggie Schulte for a 5-4 lead. Mitch Keller recorded the win as he shut City High down in the bottom of the seventh.

"There were a few times where we blew opportunities or botched a catch or something," said Xavier Coach Dave Schemmel. "But I am really glad that Ratz was ready to swing on that first pitch, that was a key hit."

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Xavier (11-8, 8-6) also got a steady performance out of starting pitcher Tyler Hines, who allowed only five Little Hawk hits over five innings.

“He pitched a great game,” said Ratz. “He kept us in it the entire game down to the end.”

Hines, who has a quick fastball, gave up his usual closing duties to take the starting gig on Monday.

“That’s the first time he has started,” said Schemmel. “Usually he is our closer but he did a really nice job out there. That probably just earned him another start in the future.”

These two high-octane teams proved to be quite a match. Xavier put a run on the board in the first inning of the nightcap when Corbin Woods walked with the bases loaded and one out, but Wieland got out of the jam and no further damage was done.

City High answered with power. Little Hawk first baseman Josh Crosby sent a lumbering two-run home run over the center field fence, putting City High up 2-1.

Xavier was the beneficiary of multiple City High errors. The Saints scored a run in the third and one more in the fourth due to Little Hawk blunders, putting them ahead 3-2.

Then in the sixth Crosby struck again, smashing a two-run double over the left fielder's head to give City High a 4-3 lead. That set up Ratz’s heroics.

The opening game had a fairytale ending, but not for Xavier. Despite the Saints scoring three in the first inning, City High won.

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With the score knotted at five in the bottom of the sixth, the wheels fell off for Xavier. There were runners on second and third for Crosby, who hit a sharp ground ball to Woods at shortstop. Woods fielded it cleanly and made the throw to first baseman Adam Pick.

City High runner Ryan Duncan broke for home right as Pick got the ball, and Xavier catcher Ben Helms let Pick's throw get away. Two runs scored and City High (16-7, 11-3) took a 7-5 lead. The next batter was pitcher Austin Mrstik and he smashed a solo home run over the right field fence for a little insurance in the late-inning win.

But Xavier ended up stealing the second game with a little late-game magic of its own.

"Against Iowa City West, we had a chance to win both of those games with just one hit here or there and we didn't get it. So it was nice to do that tonight," said Schemmel.

GAME ONE

XAVIER (5)

Grimm, cf, 4 1 1 0, Woods, ss, 2 2 0 0, Mattke, p, 3 0 0 0, Brown, 3b, 4 1 3 1, Pick, 1b, 3 0 2 1, Harriot, rf, 4 0 2 1, Hammerberg, dh, 4 0 0 0, Meaney, lf, 3 1 2 1, St. Andrews, 2b, 3 0 0 0, Helms, c, 0 0 0 0. Totals 30 5 10 4.

IOWA CITY HIGH (8)

Frakes, 2b, 3 1 3 1, Duncan, cf, 4 1 1 0, Wieland, ss, 4 1 0 0, Crosby, dh, 4 0 0 0, Hassler, 3b, 0 0 0 0, Mrstik, p, 3 2 2 1, Stika, c, 3 1 1 0, Simpson, rf, 4 1 2 0, Kenney, 1b, 2 1 1 0, Mills, lf, 3 0 1 1. Totals 30 8 11 3.

Xavier 301 001 0 - 5 10 4

City High 023 003 x - 8 11 2

Mattke and Helms. Mrstik, Duncan (6) and Stika. W - Duncan. L - Mattke. 2B - Frakes (2), Stika. 3B - Mrstik. HR - Meaney, Mrstik. SB - Woods.

GAME TWO

XAVIER (5)

Grimm, cf, 3 1 1 0, Meaney, lf, 4 0 0 0, Pick, dh, 4 2 2 0, Mattke, 1b, 2 1 2 0, Woods, ss, 2 0 0 1, Brown, 3b, 4 0 0 0, Ratz, rf, 4 0 2 2, Hines, p, 2 0 1 0, Keller, p, 1 0 0 0, St. Andrews, 2b, 4 1 0 0, Hammerberg, c, 0 0 0 0. Totals 30 5 8 3.

IOWA CITY HIGH (4)

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Frakes, 2b, 4 1 1 0, Duncan, cf, 4 1 1 0, Wieland, p, 3 1 1 0, Crosby, 1b, 2 1 2 3, Mrstik, ss, 3 0 0 0, Stika, lf, 2 0 0 0, Simpson, rf, 3 0 0 0, Hassler, 3b, 3 0 0 0, Reineke, c, 2 0 1 0, Kenney, dh, 0 0 0 0. Totals 26 4 6 3.

Xavier 101 100 2 - 5 8 1

City High 200 101 0 - 4 6 3

Hines, Keller (6) and Hammerberg. Wieland, Duncan (7) and Reineke. W - Keller. L - Duncan. 2B - Mattke, Wieland, Crosby. HR - Crosby.