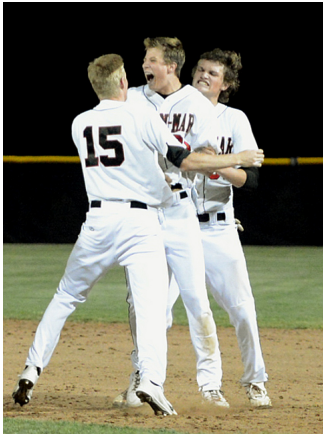


Roth lifts Lions; Saints rip J-Hawks

Written by Jim Ecker

Monday, 20 May 2013 23:14 - Last Updated Tuesday, 21 May 2013 12:16



Jimmy Roth noticed the lightning in the distance when he came to bat in the bottom of the seventh inning with the score tied, the bases loaded and two outs Monday night.

The slender senior seized the moment and produced a little lightning of his own.

Roth's single to left field lifted Linn-Mar by Prairie, 4-3, in the opening round of the Bob Vrbicek Metro Baseball Tournament at the new Linn-Mar field.

"It was a really big win against a very good team," said Roth, who looped an 0-2 pitch to the opposite field for the game-winner. "It was just a great game to win, especially at the new complex. It's a confidence booster."

The game probably would have been suspended if Roth hadn't gotten his clutch hit, because the lightning strikes were about 10 miles away and headed toward the field.

"That was going to be the last at-bat, probably," said Linn-Mar Coach Chad Lechner. "It saved a lot of headaches for planning and scheduling for everybody. I'm glad we were able to get it in."

Xavier mauled Jefferson, 12-1, in the first game Monday as Corbin Woods went 3-for-4 with a double and two home runs, including the first homer at the new park. Mitch Keller pitched a

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strong game for the Saints, allowing three hits in six innings with eight strikeouts.

Linn-Mar and Xavier will tangle in the semifinals at approximately 7 p.m. Tuesday at the Linn-Mar field. Jefferson and Prairie will meet in a consolation game at 5 p.m.



Prairie rallied for two runs in the sixth inning to tie the score, 3-3, and it went that way into the seventh.

Austin Stroschein, pitching in relief for Linn-Mar, tossed a scoreless inning in the top of the seventh to set the stage in the home half.

Kyle Mortensen led off the bottom of the seventh with a walk and alertly hustled all the way to third base on a sacrifice bunt by Austin Banks.

Prairie relief pitcher Ben Milks got the second out on a infield dribbler, but then Prairie Coach Matt Thede elected to give Mitch Stickney and Stroschein intentional walks to avoid two good hitters and set up a lefty-lefty matchup with Milks facing Roth.

Milks got ahead in the count, but Roth foiled the strategy with his single to left.

"It hit the inside part of the bat and I just poked it out there," said Roth. "I would have liked a line drive, but I'll take that any day."

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The game began as a battle between Prairie left-hander Brennan Hammer and Linn-Mar right-hander Justin Wyant, two of the best pitchers in the Mississippi Valley Conference, but it became a battle of the bullpens in the late innings.

Ben Hilsenbeck got two big outs for Linn-Mar in the top of the sixth inning after Prairie had scored two runs and loaded the bases with one out. He wriggled out of trouble to preserve the 3-3 tie and give his club a chance to win.



Stroschein was listed as the starting pitcher for Tuesday night's game, but the Lions needed him in relief to get past Prairie. Stroschein expects to start against Xavier, but Lechner said he'll make a final decision on Tuesday.

Wyant went 3-for-3 for Linn-Mar with a triple.

"That was fun," Lechner said after the tight victory. "We enjoy playing them. You have to be on your toes mentally when you're playing Prairie.

"It's nice to finish the old field with a win and then start the new one out right."

Linn-Mar rallied to win the final game at its old field in the substate finals last year to earn a trip to the state tournament.

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Jefferson took an early 1-0 lead on Xavier in the opener, but the Saints collected 14 hits and paraded around the base paths after that.

Woods, an all-state receiver and star shortstop, ripped a double in the third inning to ignite a five-run outburst. He belted a solo home run to left-center field in the fourth inning and socked another solo homer to left in the seventh.

Woods is normally a line-drive hitter and could not remember the last time he hit two homers in one game. "I don't think I've ever done it," he said.

Xavier Coach Dave Schemmel used 20 players in the ballgame. Adam Pick hit a long home run to right-center in the sixth inning.

"We have a lot of depth, a lot of talent this year," said Woods. "I'm looking forward to it."

GAME 1

XAVIER (12): Grimm, cf, 4 0 1 0, Drahozal, ph/cf, 1 0 0 0, Woods, ss, 4 3 3 2, Pick, 1b, 3 2 1 1, Robinson, pr, 0 1 0 0, Brown, 3b, 3 2 2 0, Vega, ph/3b, 1 0 1 0, Ratz, rf, 3 1 1 2, Miller, rf, 2 0 0 0, Harriott, lf, 0 1 0 0, Meaney, ph/lf, 3 1 2 0, Hammerberg, dh/c, 3 1 2 1, Helms, c, 0 0 0 0, Clarahan, ph, 1 0 0 0, Keller, p, 2 0 0 0, Gardner, cr, 0 0 0 0, Scott, p, 0 0 0 0, Dloughy, 2b, 2 0 0 0, Schulte, ph, 1 0 0 0, Schemmel, 2b, 1 0 1 1. Totals 34 12 14 7.

JEFFERSON (1): Van Scoyoc, p/cf, 4 0 1 0, Scott, cr, 0 0 0 0, Wright, 1b, 2 0 0 0, Hunt, c, 3 0 0 0, Sullivan, lf/p, 2 0 0 0, Larson, ss, 2 1 0 0, Kramer, 3b, 3 0 0 0, Frazier, cf/lf, 2 0 1 1, Spicer, dh, 2 0 0 0, Hansen, rf, 0 0 0 0, Neuberger, ph, 1 0 0 0, Johnson, 2b, 2 0 1 0, Scott, ph, 0 0 0 0. Totals 23 1 3 1.

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Xavier 005 122 2 - 12 14 0

Jefferson 010 000 0 - 1 3 4

Keller, Scott (7) and Helms, Hammerberg (7). Van Scoyoc, Sullivan (6) and Hunt. W - Keller. L - Van Scoyoc. 2B - Woods, Brown, Ratz, Frazier. HR - Woods 2, Pick. SB - Harriott, Larson, Frazier.

GAME 2

PRAIRIE (3): Mougins, ss, 3 0 0 0, Hammer, p/ph, 4 0 0 0, Dean, p, 0 0 0 0, Milks, p, 0 0 0 0, Butz, dh, 3 0 0 0, Day, c, 0 0 0 0, Votroubek, 1b, 3 1 1 0, Benson, pr, 0 0 0 0, Stallman, cf, 4 1 2 0, Davison, 4 0 0 0, Beckman, lf, 2 0 1 0, Peters, pr/lf, 0 0 0 0, Digman, 3b, 3 0 0 0, Becker, 2b, 1 1 0 1. Totals 27 3 4 1.

LINN-MAR (4): Banks, c/3b, 2 0 0 0, Larson, cr, 0 0 0 0, Strellner, ss, 4 0 0 0, Stickney, cf, 3 0 1 1, Stroschein, 3b/p, 3 0 1 0, Roth, 1b/2b, 3 0 1 1, Ollinger, 2b/c, 3 1 1 0, Wyant, p/rf, 3 0 3 1, Bettmann, cr, 0 1 0 0, Jennings, lf, 2 0 0 0, Hilsenbeck, p, 0 0 0 0, Jacobs, ph, 0 0 0 0, Kane, 1b, 1 0 0 0, Mortensen, rf/lf, 2 2 1 1. Totals 27 4 8 4.

Prairie 000 012 0 - 3 4 0

Linn-Mar 010 020 1 - 4 8 3

Hammer, Dean (5), Milks (6) and Day. Wyant, Hilsenbeck (6), Stroschein (7) and Banks, Ollinger (7). W - Stroschein. L - Milks. 2B - Stallman, Beckman. 3B - Wyant. SB - Davison, Mortensen.