

Jacobus helps Cougars nip City High

Written by Tom Fruehling

Friday, 19 July 2013 23:18 - Last Updated Friday, 19 July 2013 23:30



Kennedy's young pitchers were roughed up a bit by Iowa City High Friday night.

Luckily, they had the steady hands and clutch hitting of veteran shortstop Derek Jacobus to bail them out at Kennedy.

The Cougars squandered a 6-1 lead against the Little Hawks in the opening round of the Class 4A substate tournament, but they eked out a run in the sixth inning to advance 7-6.

Kennedy (22-18) will face Linn-Mar (25-15) in the substate semifinals Monday night at Linn-Mar, with the winner playing Iowa City West in the substate finals on Wednesday.

Out for two weeks with back and shoulder troubles, Kennedy sophomore hurler Sammy Lizarraga made his first relief appearance of the year in the bottom of the fifth with his team ahead 6-4.

He got the first two outs but then allowed a walk and two straight singles to knot the score, 6-6.

Next inning, similar scenario.

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Lizarraga loaded the bases with two outs on a single and two more walks in the bottom of the sixth. City High pitcher Tyler Stika laced a hard grounder up the middle, but the slick-fielding Jacobus ran it down and touched second base to squelch the threat.

“He doesn’t make that play and they score two runs,” said Kennedy Coach Bret Hoyer. “That was huge for us.”



Blocked by the umpire and baserunner, Jacobus said he didn’t get a particularly good jump on the sharp hit off the bat.

“I didn’t get a great read on the ball,” he said, “but I was able to count the hops and get to it. Stepping on the bag was easy.”

The junior infielder also made the final two plays in the bottom of the seventh when he back-handed two screamers, spun around and fired out the runners at first.

“Huge plays, all of them,” said Hoyer.

Jacobus downplayed the defensive gems. “In tournament play, every out is big,” he said.

Jacobus was also the star at the plate, driving in the winning run on a grounder to short with one out in the top of the sixth.

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Junior Matt Stevens opened the sixth with a single to center, advanced on a throwing error to first by Stika and went to third on a wild pitch. The error was one of five by the Little Hawks (17-22) in the game.

The game-winning RBI was the third RBI of the night for Jacobus. His first one came in the second inning on a sharp single to right field when the Cougars jumped to a 4-0 lead.

They were able to manufacture the runs on a duck-snort to right by Tony Maiers, an infield hit from Lizarraga, three walks and a bobbled ball on a sacrifice bunt.

Kennedy sophomore pitcher Zach Daniels sailed through the first two innings, but was tagged for one run in the third and three more in the fourth. That's when Lizarraga came on to pitch, until he too ran into trouble.

"It's only the second time I've thrown in three weeks," said Lizarraga. "I was just taking it pitch by pitch.

"The walks always hurt. But I was on a mission to get us out of there as quick as I could. And Derek made some great plays."

Hoyer credited City High with pounding the ball all night long against his fresh-faced pitching staff.

"But I was proud of our kids. When they tied it up 6-6, we didn't give up," he said.

"In the tournament you just hope to survive and advance. That's what we did tonight."

KENNEDY (7): Johnson, 4 0 0 1, Jacobus, 4 1 2 3, Daniels, 4 0 2 1, Skow, 3 1 0 0, Maiers, 3 0

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1 0, Sass, 3 1 0 0, Lizarraga, 2 1 0 1, Staton, 3 2 2 0, Stevens, 1 1 1 1, Smetzer, 1 0 0 0. Totals 28 7 8 7.

IOWA CITY HIGH (6): Wieland, 3 0 1 0, Frakes, 3 0 0 1, Mrstik, 4 0 2 0, Crosby, 3 1 1 0, Stika, 2 2 0 0, Simpson, 4 2 2 1, Kenney, 3 0 1 1, Hasler, 4 0 1 2, Gevock, 3 1 1 0. Totals 29 6 9 5.

Kennedy 040 201 0 - 7 8 2

IC High 001 320 0 - 6 9 5

Daniels, Lizarraga (5) and Maiers. Kenney, Wieland (2), Stika (6) and xx. W-Lizarraga. L-Stika. 2B-Wieland, Hasler.