

Hawks hold off Bobcats, 9-7

Written by Tom Fruehling

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Even after taking the lead with a big six-run fifth inning, Prairie's 9-7 nail-biting Class 4A substate semifinal win over Marshalltown Tuesday night didn't come easy.

In a game that was suspended in the third inning Monday due to severe weather, the sixth-ranked Hawks had to hang on for dear life in order to advance to Wednesday's 7 p.m. substate final against 10th-ranked Xavier on the Saints' home diamond.

Trailing 8-3, Marshalltown scored twice in the sixth inning and then opened the seventh with two straight doubles and a single when Prairie center fielder Blake Stallman slipped.

The Bobcats (17-25) were hitting ropes off Prairie reliever Spencer Dean, including a couple of foul balls, and looked like they might not stop.

But with no outs and runners on second and third, Hawk first baseman Tyler Votroubek snagged a screamer down the line and tagged the bag for an out. It would have been extra bases for sure had it gotten by him.

"I knew he was a puller," Votroubek said of left-handed batter Colton Hanke.

"So I was hugging the line. I got my body in front of it, and I wasn't going to let it get through me."

The clutch stop took the wind out of the Bobcats' sails.

Dean saved the day by getting a pop-up to the catcher and a grounder to short to end the game.

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“Give Marshalltown credit,” said Prairie Coach Matt Thede after the two-day affair. “They hit the ball hard. They put the ball in play and ran like crazy. (Votroubek) made a great play to prevent a double.”

The slugging senior, who was all-conference and third team all-state last year, was also a hero at the plate.

The visitors started the night with a 3-2 lead.

Throwing a lot of curveballs, southpaw starter Hanke had held the Hawks to two hits and mowed them down in the fourth inning Tuesday as well.

With one out in the fifth, though, Prairie’s Dylan Becker bunted safely for a hit. Back-to-back singles by Ty Mougins and Brennan Hammer loaded the bases and chased Hanke from the mound.

The Hawks (27-12) then unloaded on reliever Tyler Moranville.

Tyler Butz greeted him with a double to right center to score two runs and Caleb Davison followed with a single to right to score another.

“When they brought that new kid in, I thought I could hit him,” Butz said. “I looked for a pitch on the outside part of the plate.

“When I got one, I just batted it out to center. That seemed to get the ball rolling for us.”

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Votroubek kept it going with a two-run double to right and later scored on a single by Corbin Day.

“We were needing runs pretty bad,” he said. “I’ve been hitting well the last six or seven games. So when I got a fastball, I just sat back and drove it.”

The Hawks sent 12 batters to the plate in the fifth, scoring their six runs on seven hits.

Meanwhile, Hammer took over for starting pitcher Mitch Adams when the game resumed Tuesday night.

He shut the Bobcats down for two innings. After giving up two runs in the sixth, he gave way to Dean.

When it was over, Thede knew his team had dodged a bullet from a hard-hitting Bobcat outfit.

“They got 10 hits off of us, and in most games that should get you a victory,” he said. “But we got 11 hits and they had three errors. And we got tough when we needed to.”

MARSHALLTOWN (7): Mitchell, 3b-p, 2 0 0 0, Thimesch, 2b, 4 0 0 0, Hillygus, 1b, 3 2 2 1, Judkins, dh-3b, 4 2 2 1, McCarville, rf-c, 4 0 3 0, Hanke, p-lf, 3 1 1 1, Schrempf, lf-cf-rf, 4 1 1 1, Diveney, cf-p, 4 0 0 1, Sowers, ss, 3 1 1 1. Totals 31 7 10 6.

PRAIRIE (9): Becker, 2b, 3 1 1 0, T.Mougin, ss, 2 2 1 0, Hammer, rf-p, 4 1 1 1, Butz, 3b, 3 2 1 2, Davison, lf, 3 1 1 1, Votroubek, 1b, 4 1 2 2, Beckman, dh, 3 1 2 1, Stallman, cf, 4 0 1 1, Day, c, 3 0 1 1. Totals 29 9 11 9.

Marshalltown 012 002 2 - 7 10 4

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Prairie 011 061 x - 9 11 1

Hanke, Moranville (5), Diveney (5), Mitchell (6) and Ruddick, McCarville (6). Adams, Hammer (4), Dean (6) and Day. W-Hammer. L-Hanke. Sv-Dean. 2B-Judkins, Hillygus, Schrempf, Stallman, Votroubek, Butz. 3B-Hillygus. SB-Mitchell.