

McNeal quiets West bats

Written by Guy Martino

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IOWA CITY -- Iowa City West is used to putting big numbers up on the scoreboard. Xavier pitcher Ean McNeal allowed them to take a break from that Friday night.

McNeal pitched a complete game and held the potent West offense to two runs on five hits, helping Xavier to a 5-2 win in the second game of a Mississippi Valley Conference baseball doubleheader at West High School. West took the opener 10-1.

McNeal challenged the West hitters with his fastball and let his defense do the work.

"I tried mixing up my pitches a lot. I didn't have the changeup working well so I just tried to keep the two-seam and four-seam (fastballs) down towards the knees and it worked," said McNeal.

Both teams had pitchers who were lighting up the radar gun on West High's scoreboard. Xavier Coach Dave Schemmel thought McNeal's velocity was a key in the Saints' win.

"He was as aggressive a pitcher as he has been all year," Schemmel said. "Tonight he just went after them and threw a lot of hard stuff early, and they didn't expect it. He threw harder tonight than he has all year."

The nightcap also saw Xavier coming alive at the plate, scoring a run in each of the first four innings. In the fifth, sophomore Corbin Woods blasted a solo home run over the right field wall, making the score 5-2. Blake Helms had three hits and an RBI and Alex Ries added two RBIs for the Saints.

"We needed to get our foot down and be ready because they were throwing hard," said Schemmel. "We haven't seen that many hard throwers this year so it takes a little time to get going. We had a lot of guys come up with nice hits."

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In the opener, Iowa City West dominated offensively, collecting 14 hits.

"We didn't pitch well in the first game," Schemmel said. "When we get good pitching we generally get good defense."

This matchup had MVC implications. The Saints (13-5, 8-4) are tied with Dubuque Hempstead atop the Valley Division and West (12-8, 6-6) is tied for third, two games behind. The Xavier team wanted a sweep, but McNeal said they are happy with getting a victory in hostile territory.

"We are content with the win," he said. "We wanted to prove to everyone we could sweep the state runnerup, but we still got one so that was good."

West finished second in the Class 4A state tournament last summer, losing to Kennedy in the championship.

Xavier hosts Iowa City High in a doubleheader Monday. West is at Jefferson for a pair of games Monday.

Game 1

XAVIER (1)

Helms, ss, 4 0 1 0, Woods, 3b, 4 0 0 0, Even, 2b, 3 0 1 0, Mattke, 1b, 3 0 0 0, Ries, cf, 3 0 1 0, Hosch, dh, 3 0 1 0, McNeal, lf, 3 0 1 0, Zenisek, rf, 3 0 1 0, Brecht, c, 3 0 1 0 Totals 29 1 6 0.

WEST (10)

Peller, cf, 4 2 2 0, Siems, 4 2 2 2, Rumpf, dh, 4 1 1 1, Bonner, 1b, 4 1 2 3, Reiners, lf, 4 1 2 0, Cronk, p, 3 0 0 0, Crimmins, ss, 4 0 0 1, Shreck, 3b, 3 0 2 1, Franz, 2b, 4 2 1 0, Beasley, 1 0 0 0, Kuepker, 1 1 1 1, Ewing, 1 0 1 1 Totals 37 10 14 10.

Xavier 010 000 0 - 1 6 1

IC West 331 102 x - 10 14 1

Mehring, Even (3), Hines (6) and Brecht. Cronk, Ross (7) and Baker W –Cronk. L – Mehring.

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2B- Siems, Rumpf, Reiners, Kuepker. SB- Even, Peller 2, Siems, Franz 2.

Game 2

XAVIER (5)

Helms, ss, 4 1 3 1, Woods, 3b, 4 1 2 2, Even, 2b, 4 1 2 0, Mattke, dh, 4 0 0 0, Ries, cf, 4 1 0 2, Hosch, 1b, 4 0 0 0, Mehring, lf, 4 0 1 0, Zenisek, 4 2 1 0, Brecht, c, 4 0 0 0 Totals 36 5 10 5.

WEST (2)

Peller, cf, 3 1 1 0, Seims, rf, 3 0 0 0, Rumpf, dh, 3 0 1 1, Bonner, 1b, 3 0 0 0, Reiners, lf, 3 0 0 0, Cronk, ss, 3 1 1 0, Crimmins, p, 2 0 0 0, Schreck, 3b, 3 0 1 0, Franz, 2b, 2 0 1 0, Ewing, 1 0 0 0 Totals 26 2 5 1

Xavier 111 101 0 - 5 10 0

IC West 000 110 0 - 2 5 3

McNeal and Brecht. Crimmins, Yoder (4), Schreck (6) and Baker. W – McNeal. L – Crimmins. 2B- Zenisek. HR-Woods SB- Ries, Peller, Bonner.