

## No.5 Cougars trim Warriors for 9th win in row

Written by Jim Ecker

Saturday, 25 June 2011 00:04 - Last Updated Saturday, 25 June 2011 01:48

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Kennedy Coach Bret Hoyer had his baseball team practice the dogpile it would use to celebrate a Class 4A substate title a few years ago, just to make sure nobody got hurt and to implant a positive attitude in his players before a big game.

The man is a perfectionist, so it was no surprise he was not entirely happy with his ballclub Friday after its Mississippi Valley Conference game at Washington.

Kennedy rallied for a 4-2 victory, but the Cougars had two straight runners picked off first base and committed other sins during a two-game series with the Warriors Thursday and Friday.

So no, Hoyer was not happy.

"No, not at all," he said while supervising outfield laps after the game. "The kids know it."

Kennedy has won nine straight games, is ranked No.5 in the state and leads the MVC Mississippi Division by one game, but Hoyer is looking toward the postseason, where small mistakes could cost the Cougars a chance to defend their Class 4A state title.

Small mistakes nearly cost Kennedy (20-4, 13-1) a chance to beat the undermanned and spirited Warriors, who have only 12 players in uniform but keep battling. Hoyer wants to correct those problems now.

"The good news is, now they see why," he said. "We're lucky it didn't cost us the game. Maybe if it would have cost us the game, it would have been a blessing in disguise, because then it would have really hammered home how important it is to follow through on the things they're supposed to be doing."

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The Cougars had communication problems on defense during Thursday's 11-3 victory over Washington, then were embarrassed when two straight runners were caught napping Friday.

"You can get away with not paying attention to little things and details in USSSA ball at 12U, 13U, 14U and freshman ball, and sophomore ball to a large extent you can, but at this level teams are too well-coached," Hoyer said. "You have to pay attention to the little things and details."

The game ended in controversy in the bottom of the seventh with Washington trying to mount a rally from its 4-2 deficit. The Warriors had runners at first and third with one out when Sam Kacena hit a ground ball into the hole at shortstop, resulting in a force play at second base for the second out.

There was no time for Kennedy to try for a double play, so Kennedy second baseman Terrell Sykes held the ball as the Washington runner seemingly scored from third to make it 4-3. However, the field umpire ruled that Washington's Noah Dostal was guilty of interference for sliding beyond second base and hitting Sykes in the right leg, knocking Sykes to the ground.

As a result of the obstruction call, Kacena was ruled out at first base for a continuous double play. That ended the game and negated the run from third base.

Washington Coach Brent Henry disputed the call and argued with the field umpire, to no avail.

"That's a tough call," Henry said. "He (the umpire) felt that our runner got a late slide beyond the bag, and he read that as an interference call, so it's an automatic out for the trail runner as well."

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"It's an especially tough call to make in that situation ... one-run game, conference game, the kids have been battling all day. It's a tough way to end the ballgame."

Sykes was spiked on the right leg, but was not seriously injured.

Both starting pitchers turned in strong games. Nick Appleget pitched six innings for Kennedy and allowed two runs (one earned) with four hits, six strikeouts and one walk. Grant Dostal went 5 1/3 innings for Washington and allowed four runs (one earned) on six hits.

Dostal, a lefthander, picked two Cougars off base in the fourth inning to escape a potential jam.

Kennedy scored three runs in the sixth inning with only one hit to take its 4-2 lead. Washington committed two straight errors to begin the frame and a walk loaded the bases.

Colin Taylor pinch-hit for the Cougars and hit a sacrifice fly, tying the game 2-2. Austin Benson gave Kennedy a 3-2 lead with a single and Sykes made it 4-2 with a suicide squeeze.

Washington made it exciting in the bottom of the seventh with runners at the corners, Kacena at the plate and cleanup hitter A.J. Puk waiting in the on-deck circle with one out, but Puk never got to bat.

Devon Jacobus had two doubles for Kennedy. Jordy Brown stole two bases and scored two runs for Washington (8-14, 3-11).

The Cougars play a makeup doubleheader at Linn-Mar Saturday at 11 a.m., with Hoyer hoping his team pays closer attention to detail.

"You hate to see a team that's got this kind of ability and this type of potential stub their toe

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along the way, because of something pretty fundamental," he said.

### KENNEDY (4)

Sykes, 2b, 3 0 0 1, Christensen, dh/rf, 3 0 1 0, Appleget, p, 0 0 0 0, Michael, ss, 4 0 1 0, Yancey, lf/p, 3 1 0 0, Lloyd, lf, 0 0 0 0, Bell, 1b, 4 0 1 1, Jahlas, pr, 0 1 0 0, Maiers, c, 2 1 0 0, Jacobus, 3b, 3 0 2 0, Johnson, pr, 0 1 0 0, Ambrosy, rf/lf, 2 0 1 0, Taylor, ph, 0 0 0 1, Benson, cf, 3 0 1 1. Totals 27 4 7 4.

### WASHINGTON (2)

Brown, lf, 3 2 1 0, N. Dostal, 3b/ss, 4 0 2 1, Kacena, c, 4 0 0 0, Hogg, cr, 0 0 0 0, Puk, 1b, 2 0 1 0, White, ss/p, 2 0 1 1, Rhatigan, rf/3b, 3 0 0 0, Zingula, 2b, 3 0 0 0, G. Dostal, p/rf, 3 0 0 0, Troendle, cf, 3 0 1 0. Totals 27 2 6 2.

Kennedy 000 103 0 - 4 7 2

Washington 101 000 0 - 2 6 2

Appleget, Yancey (7) and Maiers. G. Dostal, White (6) and Kacena. W - Appleget. L - G. Dostal. S - Yancey. 2B - Jacobus 2. SB - Yancey, Brown 2.