

The hotter it is, the better Fairfax's Austin Czerwiec seems to pitch.

And it would have been hard to be any sharper that Czerwiec was during Sunday's Iowa Valley League contest against Red Top.

"I love the heat," the former Mount Mercy and Muscatine High School standout said Sunday after he allowed just one hit in a 7-0 win over the defending IVL champions at Herkleman Field on the Kennedy High School campus. "It helps keep my arm nice and relaxed and I don't have to worry about it tightening up at all."

Fairfax forfeited the second game because they did not have an umpire available. Both teams are now 3-1.

Czerwiec allowed a single to lead-off hitter Cal Clark in the first inning and little else the rest of the way. He struck out nine, walked one and hit another. He was able to keep Red Top's hitters off balance with his variety of deliveries.

"I had my curveball working, my slider working and I was locating my fastball well," he said. "If I have all my pitches working, it seems like everything else is working too."

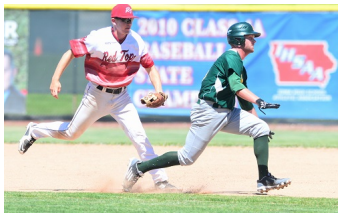
On a team loaded with former Kennedy standouts, Czerwiec fits in well. He was 6-2 with a 3.22 earned run average in his final season at Mount Mercy in 2015 and has been a steady hand on

the mound for Fairfax the past two years.

"I really enjoy playing with these guys," he said. "I've got a great catcher (Chico Lizarraga) and great guys playing behind me in the field. It's a lot of fun being out here with them."

Fairfax's defense was rock solid behind Czerwiec and the offense was led by a familiar face to foes around the IVL. Cody Bell, last week's IVL Player of the Week, made a case for winning the award again with another solid performance. He banged out a solo home run to dead center in the fourth inning and added a two-run double in the sixth. Bell also singled in the first inning.

Bell's story has been well-documented. He was a multi-sport athlete at Kennedy, playing golf, basketball and baseball. He started his college career as a golfer at Northern Iowa before transferring to Mount Mercy, where he re-started his baseball career.



He belted three homers for the Mustangs this past season and was 3-9 on the mound. Bell has a fifth year available to him, but said he will likely pass on the opportunity. He is spending most of his time this summer as an umpire and looking ahead to his future.

"It's time for me to grow up and get a real job," he said with a smile after the game. "I'd like to get something in the financial industry. I haven't found anything yet, but I am hoping to so something with finances."

Bell was one of the best players in the IVL last season and has picked up right where he left off in 2016. He enjoys being able to play with so many former Kennedy players in the league. The atmosphere is much different than it is in a college program.

"It's kind of a looser atmosphere," he said. "There's really no pressure to do anything too spectacular. You just try and stay within yourself and play the game that you love.

"It's a blast playing with guys you have played with most of your life," Bell added. "We've got some new guys this year and the team chemistry is really great."

Another former Kennedy standout, Tyler Dralle, who is currently playing football and baseball at Coe, had a single and a double, scoring twice for Fairfax.

Both teams are in action again next Sunday at 1 p.m. Fairfax will host Williamsburg while Red Top will host Watkins at Norway.