

Williamsburg matches 2017 win total

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Starting a season with a 4-2 record doesn't usually generate much talk.

After splitting Sunday's Iowa Valley League doubleheader with the defending league champion Stars, Williamsburg manager Lloyd Brockshus quipped: "This is great, we've already matched the number of games we won all last season."

The Red Sox jumped out to a 3-0 lead after two innings, then rode the strong pitching of Tanner Jansen and reliever Dustin Meiroto, to hold on for a 3-2 victory in the opener at Mount Mercy's Robert W. Plaster Athletic Complex on Sunday.

A four-run fourth-inning outburst allowed the Stars (3-3) to rally for a 5-2 victory in the nightcap.

Williamsburg has been the surprise team over the first three weeks. After finishing just 4-16 last summer in the IVL, an influx of new players, combined with a few returning standouts have the Red Sox playing winning baseball in 2018.

"On some of the past teams we didn't have as much competitiveness," said Cam Frazier, a Cedar Rapids Jefferson grad now playing at Coe. "This year we brought in a lot of (NCAA Division III) talent. We've had a lot of Simpson players step up for us big-time."

Frazier was the catalyst for Williamsburg in the opener. He had two hits in three at bats, including a double, scoring twice. Nolan Arp's two-out, two-RBI single in the second proved to be the difference.

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Ironically it was Arp, a Cedar Rapids Xavier grad and a teammate of Frazier's at Coe, who recruited him to play for Williamsburg three years ago.

"Nolan and his brother (Ryan, who was drafted in 2008 by the Los Angeles Dodgers) have played for Williamsburg forever," Frazier said. "He called me up after our first year at Coe and asked me if I wanted to come play for Williamsburg.

"It turns out that what is our home field turns out to be the farthest drive for us," said Frazier, whose younger brothers Brayden and Drake currently play at Jefferson. "Today was a home game for us. This is the closest we can get. We love playing at Mount Mercy because it is like (an NCAA Division I) field for us out here."

After building the 3-0 lead, the Red Sox turned it over to Jansen, who gave up only five hits and no earned runs. He worked around three errors and came up big in the sixth, retiring two batters with the tying run on third.

"We really had to work for it today," Jansen said. "I had to work around a couple of errors, but that is part of baseball. I worked pretty hard in the sixth so they decided to make a change and Dustin did a great job closing it out."

It looked like Williamsburg was on its way to a sweep in Game 2. Starter Travis Bowman, who also plays for Coe, held the Stars without a hit for 3 2/3 innings. He then walked Tyler Dralle and Chico Lizarraga, who both moved up 90 feet on a double steal. John Thomas broke the hitless streak for the Stars with a two-run double to tie the game.

Brockshus then went to the bullpen and brought on Ben Sterler. He promptly gave up a double to Alex Hayden to plate the go-ahead run. Devin Holmes followed with a single to bring home Hayden with the fourth run of the inning.

Adam Lloyd got the win for the Stars. He came on in relief of Blake Hargens in the second and allowed just two hits and no runs over the final six innings.

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Williamsburg returns home next Sunday to host Norway while the Stars travel to Watkins. Both twinbills are scheduled to begin at 1 p.m.