

Pitching carries Walford to sweep

Written by Metro Sports Report

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WALFORD - Fans of well-pitched, low-scoring baseball games saw a pair of gems on Sunday in the Iowa Valley League twinbill between Walford and Red Top.

And when the dust settled on a steamy day at the Walford Ball Diamond, the host Hogs came away with a sweep in what is becoming a battle between all six league teams for the championship.

The sweep lifted the Hogs to 4-4 through four weeks of IVL play while Red Top fell to 3-5.

In the opener, Ross Swinton and Mitch Moser combined on a two-hitter as Walford escaped with a 1-0 victory.

The nightcap saw Moser start and go five innings. He was relieved in the final two innings by former Linn-Mar standout Manny Jeffery as the Hogs got a pair of unearned runs in the fifth inning to post a 3-1 triumph.

"We were kind of low on pitching today," said Moser, who got the save in the opener and the win in Game 2. "Swinton threw five strong innings and then I came in and closed it out.

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"In the second game, I was able to go five strong innings," he added. "Manny came in and did a good job closing it out. It was good to see both of those guys come in and throw well."

The pitching for Red Top was just as good in the opener. Topper starter Darren Kilpatrick was brilliant, allowing just one hit over five innings.

The only run of the game was scored in the bottom of the fourth. Bryce Grimm was hit by a pitch to lead off the inning. He moved around to third when a pickoff throw got away and scored on a Jeffrey ground out to short.

Red Top had just two hits but mounted a threat in the sixth. Izaya Fullard and Ross Kramer both walked and moved to third on a Kirby Kerr sacrifice bunt. Moser relieved and struck out Dan Opdahl and Tanner Lohaus to end the threat.

"Hits were hard to come by today," Moser said. "Our defense was good and we manufactured just enough runs to get two wins today."

Red Top took a 1-0 lead in Game 2 when Lohaus shot a two-out single to right to score Fullard in the second inning.



That lead held until the home fourth. Grimm reached on an error and stole second. He moved to third on an infield out and came home on Logan Holtz's single to left.

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Grimm was in the middle of the action when the Hogs took a 3-1 lead in the fifth. With two outs and runners on second and third, he hit a slow grounder toward Cal Clark at short. Lohaus was unable to scoop up a low throw at first base, allowing the two go-ahead runs to score.

Red Top mounted a threat in the seventh. With one out, Kerr singled to center. Opdahl walked and Lohaus reached on an error to load the bases. Jeffery then took matters into his own hands, striking out Corbin Day and finishing the game with a strikeout of Hunter Porterfield.

"Manny hasn't thrown too many innings this summer," Moser said. "It was good to have him come in to start an inning and then get through the seventh."

Walford had just two hits in Game 2. Red Top had three.

Moser is one of the veterans on the Walford roster. He is in his seventh year. The Atkins native closed out his college career in 2017 at Upper Iowa. He likes the way this year's Walford team is coming together.

"It's different this year," he said. "We don't have as many veteran guys as we have had in the past. We have a bunch of first-year college guys on the team. They're good guys and it's fun to be out here playing baseball with them."

Walford hits the road next Sunday for a 4 p.m. doubleheader at Watkins while Red Top will host Williamsburg in a 1 p.m. twinbill at Iowa City West.