

Hayden saves Cougars against Waterloo East

Written by Tom Fruehling

Friday, 13 July 2012 22:15 - Last Updated Saturday, 14 July 2012 01:28



Unlike their doubleheader last month when Cedar Rapids Kennedy blew out Waterloo East twice, the Cougars had to work hard to eke out a 2-0 victory Friday night at home in the first round of the Class 4A substate tournament.

Kennedy ace Alex Hayden (9-2) was all but untouchable, limiting the Trojans to just three infield hits and a bloop single to left barely over the head of third baseman Cody Bell.

The crafty right-hander struck out 11 and walked only one batter in six innings. Nick Appleget pitched the seventh inning for the save.

“When Alex is on he’s awfully hard on the hitters,” said Kennedy Coach Bret Hoyer. “And he was on tonight. He’s a pretty special pitcher.”

The second-ranked Cougars (31-6) earned a bye in the second round of the tournament Monday night and will host Xavier or Cedar Falls in the substate finals on Wednesday. Xavier hosts Cedar Falls on Monday night in Round 2.

A month ago, Kennedy throttled East 13-0 and 15-0 in a doubleheader at Waterloo.

“They walked us a bunch of times and were pretty generous to us,” Hoyer said. “Their pitcher did a nice tonight.”

Trojan hurler Bryce Frost (2-2) turned in a solid six-inning performance, holding Kennedy’s hitters mostly in check.

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With two outs in the first inning, Logan Ambrosy lofted a high fly that smacked off the wall in center field for a double. He scored on what would have been the third out on an overthrow to first base.

Then, in the fifth, Josh Jahlas led off with a single to right and stole second. With two outs, he scored from second on a bobbled ball by the second baseman.

“We didn’t hit real well tonight,” said Hayden, who collected one of Kennedy’s eight hits. “We didn’t bring our big bats and popped up too many times.”

Hoyer agreed.

“We need to shorten up and get more line drives and grounders through the infield,” he said. “There were too many fly balls.”

Still, Hayden saved the day.

“I felt good,” he said. “My curveball was pretty inconsistent, but I was hitting my spots with the fastball.”

He did throw a half-dozen pitches into the dirt, but catcher Jimmy “Chico” Lizarraga bailed him out each time by smothering the ball.

“I just tried to keep the ball in front of me,” said Lizarraga, who saved a sure run in the third by stopping an errant pitch with the bases loaded and one out.

The steady backstop considers himself part of the pitching staff.

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"As a staff," he said, "we just try to put our team in a position to win. We did that tonight by not giving up any runs."

WATERLOO EAST (0)

Magnuson, ss, 3 0 1 0, Scribener, rf, 2 0 0 0, Billings, cf, 3 0 0 0, Mnayer, 3b, 3 0 0 0, Sahr, c, 3 0 1 0, Schutte, 1b, 3 0 0 0, Frost, p, 3 0 0 0, Howard, dh, 2 0 0 0, Faith, lf, 3 0 2 0, Ramirez, 2b, 0 0 0 0. Totals 25 0 4 0.

KENNEDY (2)

Jahlas, cf, 3 1 1 0, Bell, 3b/1b, 3 0 1 0, Sass, pr, 0 0 0 0, Ambrosy, 1b/rf, 3 1 1 0, Dv Jacobus, 2b/3b, 3 0 1 1, Hayden, p/2b, 3 0 1 0, Lizarraga, c, 3 0 1 0, Moa, cr, 0 0 0 0, Lloyd, rf, 3 0 1 0, Appleget, p, 0 0 0 0, Dk Jacobus, ss, 2 0 1 0, A.Johnson, lf, 3 0 0 0. Totals 26 2 8 1.

Waterloo East 000 000 0 - 0 4 1

Kennedy 100 010 x - 2 8 0

Frost and Sahr; Hayden, Appleget (7) and Lizarraga. W - Hayden (9-2). L - Frost. 2B - Ambrosy.