

## No-name Cougars stun No.4 Johnston

Written by Jim Ecker

Saturday, 06 July 2013 20:00 -

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Bret Hoyer has won 553 games and a state title during his career as the baseball coach at Kennedy High School, so it's usually not a great surprise when the Cougars upset a ranked team at home.

This one, however, belongs in the "Holy Cow!" department for startling developments.

The Cougars stunned No.4 Johnston, 6-5, Saturday afternoon with an improbable concoction of players that had Kennedy fans scratching their heads and wondering "Who's he?"

Kyle Brewer, Jacob Henry and Tyler Dralle got promoted from the sophomore team Friday and played prominent roles in the victory. So did Parker Fifield, a seldom-used member of the varsity who collected the game-tying hit. And so did David King, the emergency starting pitcher.

It was improbable, unlikely, amazing and slightly flabbergasting.

"All of the above," agreed Hoyer, laughing and smiling. "As the game progressed, I was just incredibly proud of how the kids competed and how they responded, being thrown into a tough situation.

"They gave themselves an opportunity to win and we were able to pull it out at the end."

Hoyer had to reach into his bag of tricks because two starters are nursing injuries (Derek Jacobus and Ben Sass), two other starters got benched for a minor breach of rules, and another guy who could have pitched (Jackson Behn) has moved to Omaha with his family and is not coming back.

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Brewer, a sophomore, played left field and went 2-for-2 with a key walk and two RBIs. Henry, a freshman, played a flawless game at shortstop. Dralle, also a freshman, got two key outs as a relief pitcher in the fifth inning after Johnston had scored four runs against King.

Fifield, used mostly as a courtesy runner this year, started at second base and got the biggest hit of his life when he tied the game in the sixth inning with an RBI double.

"Major League players get called up from Triple-A at any point in time," said Hoyer. "We had three kids come up from the sophomore squad. They practiced with us for the first time last night. They stepped right in and concentrated on just playing baseball."

Hoyer praised sophomore coaches Matt Winter and Tyler Kaleb for getting Brewer, Henry and Dralle ready for the big leagues.

The Cougars trailed, 5-4, heading into the bottom of the sixth inning. Brock Skow led off with a single and David Pauls entered the game as a pinch-runner. Joel Smetzer bunted Pauls into scoring position at second base.

Fifield, who had only one hit all year prior to Saturday, promptly hit a double down the right-field line to drive in Pauls and tie the game at 5-5. Johnston changed pitchers at that point, but the Cougars kept pecking away.

Brewer walked to put runners on first and second with one out. Miles Moa struck out, but Andrew Johnson drew a walk to load the bases with two outs. Matt Stevens walked on a 3-2 pitch to force in Fifield with the go-ahead run to make it 6-5. Jared Staton lined out to right field to end the inning and Kennedy carried its precarious 6-5 lead into the top of the seventh.

Tony Maiers, pitching for only the fourth time this season, got the first out on a fly ball to center field, but Johnston got back-to-back singles to put runners on first and second with one out.

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Alex McCune belted a ball to deep right field, but Stevens raced back and made a sensational catch for the second out. The runner from second base tagged and went to third, putting runners on the corners with two outs.

Maiers got Nick Stitzell to hit a routine fly ball to center field to end the game and the Cougars (16-12) had their improbable victory.

Johnston had a few unfamiliar names on the field against Kennedy as well, but the fourth-ranked Dragons had at least six regulars in the starting lineup.

Kennedy began the day with a 15-3 loss to North Scott in the first game of the round-robin event, so the triumph over Johnston was even more of a surprise. North Scott (15-15) was the big winner Saturday with its 15-3 victory over Kennedy and an 8-6 conquest of Johnston (18-10).

Brewer is a member of the sophomore class at Kennedy that enjoyed a high level of success as Junior Cougars. He was promoted to the varsity on Friday and hopes to stay there.

"I'm just trying to take the opportunity and make the best of it," he said.

Brewer confessed to being a little nervous, but was glad he could contribute with his two hits, two RBIs and that walk in the sixth inning.

"I'm happy," he said. "Surprised, kind of."

So were a lot of people.

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### GAME 1

NORTH SCOTT (15): Huber, 2b, 5 1 2 4, Brenaman, ss, 3 2 1 1, Engler, 3b, 4 3 4 5, Arp, 1b, 4 2 2 1, Kreiter, rf, 4 1 0 0, Fleetwood, p, 4 0 2 0, Vaske, cr, 0 0 0 0, Ogden, p, 0 0 0 0, Moseley, c, 4 0 2 1, Williams, cr, 0 1 0 0, Verbrugge, lf, 4 3 3 0, Schelin, cf, 3 2 1 0. Totals 35 15 17 12.

KENNEDY (3): Daniels, ss, 3 0 2 3, Johnson, cf, 3 0 1 0, Staton, 1b, 2 0 0 0, Brewer, ph, 1 0 0 0, Maiers, c, 2 0 0 0, Althoff, c, 1 0 0 0, Skow, 3b, 1 0 0 0, Fifield, ph, 1 0 0 0, Stevens, rf, 2 0 0 0, Smetzer, 2b, 2 2 1 0, Lizarraga, dh, 1 1 1 0, Moa, lf, 1 0 0 0, Hargens, p, 0 0 0 0, Jurgensen, p, 0 0 0 0, Divis, p, 0 0 0 0, Dralle, p, 0 0 0 0, Henry, p, 0 0 0 0. Totals 20 3 5 3.

North Scott 244 23 - 15 17 1

Kennedy 020 10 - 3 5 4

Fleetwood, Ogden (5) and Moseley. Hargens, Jurgensen (2), Divis (3), Henry (5) and Maiers, Althoff (5). W - Fleetwood. L - Hargens. 2B - Huber, Breneman, Engler 3, Arp. 3B - Huber. HR - Engler.

### GAME 2

JOHNSTON (5): Heuss, lf, 2 1 1 0, Kinning, ss, 4 1 1 2, McCauley, 1b, 3 1 1 0, Jacobsen, dh, 4 0 2 1, McCune, rf, 4 1 2 1, Stitzell, 3b, 4 0 0 0, Kramer, cf, 3 0 0 0, Montee, c, 2 0 1 0, Schade, cr, 0 1 0 0, Onder, cr, 0 0 0 0, Ryan, 2b, 3 0 0 0, Ramsey, p, 0 0 0 0, Woods, p, 0 0 0 0. Totals 29 5 8 4.

KENNEDY (6): Johnson, cf, 3 0 0 0, Stevens, rf, 2 1 0 1, Staton, 1b, 4 0 0 0, Maiers, c/p, 3 0 1 0, Moa, cr, 0 0 0 0, Skow, 3b, 3 2 2 0, Pauls, pr, 0 1 0 0, Smetzer, dh, 2 0 0 0, King, p, 0 0 0 0, Dralle, p, 0 0 0 0, Fifield, 2b, 2 1 1 1, Brewer, lf, 2 1 2 2, Henry, ss, 2 0 0 0, Moa, ph, 1 0 0 0, Jurgensen, c, 0 0 0 0. Totals 24 6 6 4.

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Johnston 010 040 0 - 5 8 4

Kennedy 120 102 x - 6 6 3

Ramsey, Woods (6) and Montee. King, Dralle (5), Maiers (6) and Maiers, Jurgensen (6). W - Maiers. L - Ramsey. 2B - Kinning, Jacobsen, McCune, Fifield. SB - Stevens.