

Mattke delivers the long ball for Saints

Written by Jim Ecker

Wednesday, 23 May 2012 23:26 -

Mack Mattke is a big, strong guy at 6-foot-6 and 220 pounds, but he's always had trouble hitting home runs for the Xavier High School baseball team.

Until now.

Mattke slugged a three-run homer Wednesday night and hit a game-winning double in the bottom of the seventh inning as the eighth-ranked Saints clipped Linn-Mar, 9-8, for third place in the Metro Baseball Tournament at Veterans Memorial Stadium.

Mattke hit .374 as a sophomore in 2010, but didn't hit any homers. He climbed to .413 last season as a junior, but still didn't knock any out of the park.

Now he's slugged two homers in two days. He collected a four-bagger against Prairie in the semifinals Tuesday night, then hit a mammoth shot to left field against Linn-Mar.

The bats are deader this year due to new bat restrictions, but Mattke has been swinging a lively stick. He credits a regimen of lifting weights, getting in shape and losing about 20 pounds from last season.

"I'm a lot stronger," he said. "I was about 240 last year, I'm at about 220 now. That might have helped a little bit too."

Mattke crushed a three-run homer to give Xavier a quick 3-0 lead in the bottom of the first. The Saints kept marching across home plate and had an 8-2 advantage after four innings, but Linn-Mar rallied and tied the game at 8-8 with six runs over the last three frames.

Mattke came up in the bottom of the seventh inning with two outs and Mitch St. Andrews on first base with a walk. Mattke walloped a shot to deep left-center and St. Andrews raced around

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the bases with the winning run.

"It's not really getting the hit, it's getting the win," said Mattke. "That's the thing I think of."

Mattke got his game-winning hit an inning after being spiked on the ankle by a Linn-Mar runner while playing first base. Mattke fell to the ground in pain after getting spiked, but picked himself up and stayed around to get the clutch double.

Mattke will be headed to Purdue University this summer to study engineering and will be joining the Purdue baseball team as an invited walk-on as a pitcher and first baseman.

Mattke stopped by the Purdue baseball office when he visited the campus to meet the coach and let him know he was interested in joining the team. Purdue Coach Doug Schreiber didn't know who he was and didn't know a 6-foot-6 ballplayer would be stopping by that day.

"No. No idea," said Mattke. "My dad and I just showed up at his door and walked into his office."

Mattke was not invited to join the team during that initial visit, but Schreiber has assured him that he's welcome to compete for a spot on the team this fall and winter before the roster is finalized prior to the 2013 campaign. Purdue won the Big Ten this spring and is top seeded in this week's conference tournament with a 41-12 record.

"I know it's going to be a hard road," he said, "but I'm willing to do that to play at a high level."

Corbin Woods went 3-for-5 for the Saints (2-1) and pitched four good innings before moving to shortstop with an 8-2 lead. He didn't get the win, because Linn-Mar rallied to tie the game. Tyler Hines got the victory in relief, even though he gave up the tying runs in the top of the seventh.

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Austin Banks hit a two-run homer for Linn-Mar (1-2).

LINN-MAR (8)

Kvach, 2b, 4 1 0 1, Bogert, lf, 3 1 1 1, Redmond, cf, 4 0 0 0, Stickney, rf, 3 1 2 1, Stroschein, p/3b, 4 1 1 0, Banks, c, 3 1 1 2, Meier, cr, 0 1 0 0, Wyant, 3b, 2 0 0 0, Blackford, p, 1 0 1 1, Digmann, cr, 0 2 0 0, Stolley, 1b, 3 0 1 0, Meier, pr, 0 0 0 0, Strellner, ss, 1 0 1 0, Roth, ph, 1 0 1 1. Totals 29 8 9 7.

XAVIER (9)

Grimm, cf, 5 1 1 0, Woods, p/ss, 5 0 3 0, Harriott, cr, 0 2 0 0, Mattke, 1b, 3 1 2 4, Herder, pr, 0 1 0 0, Ratz, rf, 3 0 0 0, Pick, dh, 4 1 2 2, Keller, ss, 0 0 0 0, Scott, p, 0 0 0 0, Hines, p, 0 0 0 0, Brown, 3b, 3 0 0 0, Hammerberg, c, 4 0 1 0, Dlouhy, cf, 0 0 0 0, Meaney, lf, 3 1 1 0, St. Andrews 3 2 2 0. Totals 33 9 12 6.

Linn-Mar 000 213 2 - 8 9 1

Xavier 320 300 1 - 9 12 2

Stroschein, Blackford (4) and Banks. Woods, Scott (5), Pick (6), Hines (7) and Hammerberg. W - Hines. L - Blackford. 2B - Blackford, Mattke. 3B - Pick, Meaney. HR - Banks, Mattke. SB - Bogert 2, Harriott, Meaney.