

Linn-Mar errors gift-wrap Saints sweep

Written by Mike Condon
Thursday, 27 June 2013 21:37 -

There was a mini-celebration around the dugout after Cedar Rapids Xavier's softball sweep over visiting Linn-Mar at Bob Erusha Field.

The Saints and their fans broke out in song, singing "Happy Birthday" to Xavier Coach Nikki Price.

Ironically, Price and her team got more than their share of gifts from the Lions during the games. Linn-Mar committed seven errors in the two games and a pop fly that dropped for a hit on what would have been the final out, led to a nine-run first-inning explosion the propelled the Saints to a 13-1 win in three innings in Game 1.

The nightcap was much more competitive, but two crucial errors led to three Xavier runs as the Saints won, 5-2.

"We've talked a lot all season about when you are given an opportunity, you have to take advantage of it," Price said. "You can't let those chances pass by. Tonight, we didn't."

The sweep pushed Xavier, ranked No. 7 in Class 4A, to 23-7 overall, 16-6 in MVC play. Coach Mike Shipley's Lions fell to 10-20, 7-13.

Linn-Mar got off to a good start in the opener. Sophomore Alexis Kelsey blasted a monster home run over the center field fence to give the Lions a 1-0 lead.

Xavier put two runners on with two outs against Kelsey in the bottom of the first and it appeared Linn-Mar would get out of the inning when Jamie Feltes popped a ball toward left field. Three Lions converged on the ball, but none were able to catch it, allowing two Saints to score.

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The offense took off from there. Five of the next six batters got base hits. That, combined with two walks and an error, resulted in nine runs scoring.

"That first inning just killed us," Shipley said. "They ended up sending nine or 10 batters to the plate after the bloop that should have been caught. We just didn't respond to that at all."

With the big cushion, Xavier made quick work of the first game, scoring two additional runs in the second and the third to end the game by the 12-run rule.

The quick win allowed Price to bring back top pitcher Erin Drahozal in the second game.

"That wasn't our original plan," Price admitted. "The 3-inning game changed things. It was good to get her back out there, build up a little more endurance because you never know when a game might go extra innings."

To its credit, Linn-Mar responded with a better effort in Game 2.

"They were challenged between games, to play hard, communicate with each other, to leave it out here," Shipley said. "We left a lot of runners on base in that game and had lots of opportunities. I thought we battled hard and made a lot of improvement from the first game.

"But against a quality team like Xavier, you can't make mistakes," he added. "If you do, it will cost you and it cost us tonight."

As they did in Game 1, Linn-Mar took a 1-0 lead. Pitcher Maddy Ryan retired the first six Saints, but in the third it was the bottom of the Xavier order that got things going. Erica Miller and Haley Deutmeyer opened the third with singles. After a bunt moved them into scoring position, a throwing error allowed one run to score and, after a walk, another error led to two

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more runs. When the inning finally ended, four runs had scored.

That was all the Saints needed. Linn-Mar had scoring chances in the fifth and sixth, but could not come up with the big hit. Kelsey hit her second homer of the night, a solo shot with two outs in the seventh, but it wasn't enough.

Miller, Xavier's senior catcher, had three hits in four official at bats in the twinbill. She is part of the bottom third of the order that combined for eight hits in the two games.

"We have a good lineup from top to bottom," she said. "We have all worked really hard and I think it helps for the tail end of the order to pick up the rest of the order."

The wins were big for the Saints, who are in a battle for an MVC title. Miller knows there isn't much time left.

"We want to keep playing our game and keep performing to our abilities," she said. "We need to keep doing that to keep moving forward in the conference."

GAME 1

LINN-MAR (1): K. Ollinger, cf, 2 0 0 0, E. Ollinger, ss-3b, 2 0 0 0, Kelsey, p-ss, 2 1 1 1, Ryan, rf, 1 0 0 0, Rentschler, 1b-3b-1b, 1 0 0 0, Duggan, 2b, 1 0 0 0, Lincoln, dh, 1 0 0 0, Harms, lf, 0 0 0 0, Yearling, c, 1 0 1 0, Decker, cr, 0 0 0 0, Swanson, 3b-p, 1 0 0 0, Bodensteiner, 1b, 0 0 0 0. Totals 12 1 2 1.

XAVIER (13): Schwach, 2b, 3 1 2 2, Galligan, lf, 2 2 1 1, Schulte, 1b, 1 2 1 0, Drahozal, p, 3 0 0 0, Helms, cr, 0 1 0 0, Feltes, 3b, 3 1 2 2, Breitbach, rf, 3 1 2 2, Miller, c, 1 0 1 1, Bastian cr, 0 2 0 0, Deutmeyer, ss, 2 1 1 1, Colston, cf, 2 2 1 2. Totals 20 13 11 11.

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Linn-Mar 100 - 1 2 4

Xavier 932 – 13 11 0

Kelsey, Swanson (3) and Yearling. Drahozal and Miller. W - Drahozal, L - Kelsey. HR - Kelsey, 2B - Galligan, Schulte, Feltes, Colston.

GAME 2

LINN-MAR (2): K. Ollinger, cf, 4 0 0 0, E. Ollinger, ss-3b, 3 0 1 0, Kelsey, ss, 3 1 1 1, Ryan, p, 3 0 0 0, Decker, cr, 0 1 0 0, Rentschler, 1b, 3 0 2 0, Duggan, 2b, 2 0 1 0, Lincoln, c, 2 0 0 1, Yearling, rf, 2 0 0 0, Swanson, 3b, 1 0 0 0. Totals 23 2 5 2.

XAVIER (5): Schwach, 2b, 4 1 0 0, Galligan, lf, 3 0 1 1, Schulte, 1b, 4 0 0 0, Drahozal, p, 4 0 1 0, Helms, cr, 0 0 0 0, Feltes, 3b, 3 0 0 0, Breitbach, rf, 1 0 0 0, Miller, c, 3 0 2 0, Bastian cr, 0 1 0 0, Deutmeyer, ss, 3 1 1 1, Colston, cf, 2 1 2 0. Totals 27 5 7 2.

Linn-Mar 010 000 1 - 2 5 3

Xavier 004 001 x – 5 7 0

Ryan and Lincoln. Drahozal and Miller. W - Drahozal, L - Ryan. HR - Kelsey, 2B - Colston. SB-Schwach, Galligan.