

Busy J-Hawks sweep Prairie in showdown

Written by Jim Ecker

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Jefferson baseball coach Kyle Rodenkirk calls it a "big league schedule," but not even Major Leaguers play seven games in four days.

The fourth-ranked J-Hawks did it this week and went home Friday night tired but happy.

Jefferson swept a Mississippi Valley Conference twinbill from No.8 Prairie, 5-2 and 5-3, at the Jefferson field Friday to finish the busy week with a flashy 6-1 record.

"I'm real proud of every single one of the guys," said Rodenkirk. "I told the guys in the preseason: We've got a big-league schedule, and how many of you guys like to practice? Not many rose their hand.

"I said, 'Hey, what better way to do it? Let's go out and play ball.'"

Jefferson beat Des Moines East in a single game Tuesday, swept Dubuque Wahlert on Wednesday, split with Xavier on Thursday and swept Prairie on Friday.

The J-Hawks raised their overall record to 16-4, solidifying their claim as one of the top teams in the state.

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Jefferson has a similar schedule next week with eight games in five days.

The J-Hawks enjoyed a successful week despite Jarred Wood and Spencer VanScoyoc, two of their top guys, missing part of the week due to other baseball commitments.

Wood participated in the Perfect Game Junior National Showcase on Monday in Florida and appeared at the Area Code Games on Thursday in Minneapolis, VanScoyoc missed the twinbills with Xavier and Prairie while attending the PG National Showcase in Florida.

Wood returned to Cedar Rapids on Friday morning and was one of the stars against Prairie. He pitched the last three innings of the first game, then tossed the first four innings of the nightcap.

Wood, a sophomore, did not know he was going to start Game 2 until Rodenkirk asked him if he could pitch again.

"I was surprised, actually," he said. "I felt great. My arm felt amazing."

Wood surrendered an unearned run in the first game and collected a save. He rested for about 30 minutes between games, then allowed one earned run in the nightcap and got the victory. He enjoyed quite a week with the trip to Florida, the trip to Minneapolis and a prominent role in the sweep of

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Prairie.

"I'm getting some emails from big-time colleges on him," said Rodenkirk. "He's opening some eyes. He's going to be good. He's going to be real good."

VanScoyoc, a junior, has already committed to Arizona State for college baseball, but he's attending the national showcase in Florida to try and improve his stock for the 2016 Major League draft.

VanScoyoc, an all-state selection, is an outstanding hitter, pitcher and center fielder, but the J-Hawks were too tough for the Prairie Hawks, even without one of their best players.

"We've got a lot of depth," said Rodenkirk. "Our motto is 'Next Guy Up.' It gives another guy an opportunity to get in there and see what he's got and fly with it."



Prairie fell to 12-4 with the two losses.

"We made too many mistakes and I felt they didn't. And it came back to get us," said Prairie Coach Todd Rima.

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"Their pitchers did a good job. We didn't execute offensively. It's been a strength of ours all year and today they were better than us on the mound. So tip your hats to them."

Tyler Davidson pitched four strong innings for Jefferson in the first game to get the victory. He allowed one run on two hits, then gave the ball to Wood.

Wood kept Prairie in check for the first four innings in the nightcap, then gave the ball to Jared Eivins for the last three frames. Eivins was touched for two runs in the sixth inning on a two-run double by Nic Mouglin, but escaped further damage and got a three-inning save.

Eivins and Tyler Konigsmark had two hits for Jefferson in the first game and Caleb Stekl belted a solo home run. Tyler Roeder had two hits for the J-Hawks in the nightcap and Cal Clark had two hits for Prairie.

GAME 1

Prairie 000 101 0 - 2 5 2

Jefferson 203 000 x - 5 9 2

W - Davidson. L - Mouglin. S - Wood.

GAME 2

Prairie 001 002 0 - 3 6 3

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Jefferson □ 030 110 x - 5 5 1

W - Wood. L - Sanborn. S - Eivins.