

Meyers has some good stories to tell

Written by Jim Ecker

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Forty years from now, Sam Meyers will be able to tell his grand-kids about the night he battled the great Spencer VanScoyoc and was able to leave the ballpark with a smile.

Meyers nearly hit a home run against the Cedar Rapids Jefferson star Monday night for the Xavier Saints in the second game of their doubleheader, settling for a long double off the left-field fence at the Jefferson field that missed being a home run by only a few feet.

Later in the game, Meyers struck out VanScoyoc with a high fastball for a rare whiff of one of the top high school players in the country.

VanScoyoc later got revenge against Meyers with a two-run homer that may or may not have landed by now, but Meyers might conveniently forget to tell his grand-kids about that part of the evening.

"Yeah," he said, smiling. "We'll keep that a secret."

Meyers and the Xavier Saints did not get any victories against VanScoyoc and the sixth-ranked J-Hawks, but they continued to show improvement in their 5-2 and 9-5 setbacks in a Mississippi Valley Conference twinbill.

VanScoyoc, a star pitcher and hitter, was selected by the Toronto Blue Jays in the 19th round of the Major League draft last week and has a scholarship to Arizona State in his back pocket if he decides to attend college instead of turning pro.

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VanScoyoc also socked a long home run in the first game Monday and now has nine round-trippers in 16 games this season, the most home runs by any prep player in Iowa. A gifted left-hander on the mound, he's hit 92 mph on the radar gun this spring and has a wicked curveball.

Meyers, a stocky junior, launched a long fly ball against VanScoyoc in the second inning of the nightcap that looked for a long time that it would leave the yard.

"It felt really good," he said about the two-bagger. "He's a really great pitcher and I just tried to hit the ball.

"I didn't think it was going to be a double," he said. "I thought it was going to be a pop-fly. It just kept going."



VanScoyoc pitched two scoreless innings for Jefferson in the second game and then moved to center field, possibly to save his arm for Friday's showdown at fifth-ranked Prairie.

Meyers later socked another double in the game, making him 2-for-2. He allowed eight runs in 4 1/3 innings on the mound, with that one strikeout of a guy who might play in the Major Leagues some day.

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Jefferson owned a 9-1 lead in the nightcap and appeared headed for a 10-run victory, but Xavier battled back with three runs in the sixth inning and another run in the seventh to pull within 9-5. Bryce Charipar, who returned to action for the Saints after being sidelined with a neck injury, belted a two-run homer in the sixth inning.

The Saints fell to 2-13 overall and 0-9 in the conference, but they've shown definite improvement the last 10 days with better hitting, defense and pitching.

"We're battling," said Coach Bob Cataldo. "We're competing, there's no doubt about it. That's what I love about this team. They never quit."

Manny Olutunde went 4-for-5 for Jefferson in the second game. Jared Eivins was 3-for-5 with a double, home run and two RBIs. Zeb Render and Jarred Wood had two hits for the J-Hawks. Brock Hunt also hit a home run for Jefferson.

Sean Murphy, Bryce Schulte, Charipar and Meyers had two hits for Xavier in the nightcap.

Connor VanScoyoc pitched a complete game for Jefferson in the 5-2 victory in the first game. He allowed two runs on five hits, with seven strikeouts and no walks.

Spencer VanScoyoc was 2-for-3 in the opener with a two-run homer into the trees in center field. Olutunde, Eivins and Brayden Frazier had two hits for Jefferson.

Jefferson raised its records to 12-4 overall and 8-2 in the conference.