

North baseball slugs way to ECIC I lead

by **PATRICK J. NAGY**
Reporter

Heading into the 2007 season, Williamsville North coach Jerry Scarcella thought his baseball team would have strong pitching and good fielding. It's the hitting that has surprised him the most and has placed them in first place in ECIC Division I at 8-1, 11-2 overall.

"I figured we would be hitting a lot of small ball (infield singles, bunts) but we're hitting the ball all over the yard," said Scarcella. "I'm hoping we can keep it going."

Last week, North went 5-0 against ECIC Division I league opponents and slugged 68 hits and scored 59 runs.

The Spartans blew out Frontier, 14-3, on Monday, April 30, West Seneca West, 10-0, on Friday, May 4, and Lancaster, 13-6, on Saturday, May 5 and came from behind to defeat Clarence, 11-10, in eight innings on Wednesday, May 2, and Frontier, 11-9, on Thursday, May 3.

Out of all five games, the Clarence victory was the sweetest. North trailed 9-2 after the fifth inning and 10-6 heading into the bottom of the seventh. With two outs, North scored four runs in the bottom of the seventh to send the game into extra innings.

Nick Fronczak hit a bases loaded single to drive in Alex Calderon and Pat Dwyer

and two batters later, John Ticco singled in pinch runners Geoff Stallman and Eric Dahlman. In the bottom of the eighth, Calderon singled in Jared Fabian for the unbelievable come-from-behind victory.

"It might have been the most exciting game I've ever been a part of," said Scarcella. "We just battled and didn't panic. I was as surprised as anybody that we came all the way back. That's a life lesson for anybody."

North took an early 2-0 lead on Clarence in the first after a two-RBI single from Calderon scored Dwyer and Austin Benschadle. North added four runs in the fifth — Dwyer singled in Garrett Crage, Calderon plated Benschadle on a fielder's choice, and Zimmerman launched a two-run home run, his seventh of the season. The school record for most home runs is eight.

Calderon finished 3 for 5 with two RBIs. Fronczak hit 2 for 4 with two RBIs. North had 12 hits as a team.

Brad Stellrecht earned the win on the mound, throwing 4.1 innings and allowing five hits and one earned run. Mike Koch pitched a 1-2-3 eighth inning for his third save.

North also trailed Frontier 5-0 going into the bottom of the third but scored eight runs to take a commanding lead they never relinquished. Ticco and Dahlman each hit

twice in the inning. Ticco scored twice. Dahlman, Fabian, Dwyer, Benschadle, Calderon, and Zimmerman also scored a run.

"It was a wild inning," said Scarcella. "None of the hits were cheap."

Dwyer (2 for 4, two RBIs, scored twice), Ticco (3 for 3, double, triple, four RBIs) and Zimmerman (2 for 4, double, two RBIs) led the North bats, which hit 14 times as a team.

Dahlman threw six innings and allowed eight hits to pick up the win. Koch earned his fourth save.

North's offense erupted in its other three games of the week. The Spartan bats powered for 16 hits versus Frontier. Zimmerman was 2 for 4 with a home run and three RBIs. Fronczak was 2 for 5 with a solo home run and three RBIs. Benschadle hit 2 for 4 and scored twice. Taylor Gahagan was 3 for 4 with a walk, double, RBI, and scored twice. Ticco was 3 for 5 with an RBI.

Zack Boron earned the win, allowing six hits, two earned runs, and striking out four.

North pounded out 13 hits against West Seneca West and Lancaster. Calderon picked up the win against West Seneca West, allowing three hits, no walks, and striking out five, and was 2 for 3 at the plate with an RBI.

Benschadle (3 for 4, two RBIs), Fronczak (2 for 4, two RBIs) and John Piagnone (2 for 4, RBI) also contributed for North against West Seneca West.

North led Lancaster 4-3 before exploding for eight runs in the fourth to put the game out of reach for the Redskins. Gahagan tripled home Zimmerman, Fronczak and Ticco, Benschadle doubled in Fabian and Dwyer, Calderon singled in Benschadle, and Zimmerman doubled in Calderon.

"It's contagious," said Scarcella. "If one player gets on base, it's like a frenzy. We just start pounding the ball."

Gahagan (4 for 4, triple, double, three RBIs), Zimmerman (3 for 4, double, three RBIs) and Benschadle (2 for 3, double, two RBIs) led North's offense.

Boron went the final 4.1 innings and allowed four hits, three runs and struck out five for the victory.

North, ranked second among Western New York large schools, hosted Sweet Home on Monday, May 7 and West Seneca West on Tuesday, May 8 but results were unavailable before The Bee went to press. The Spartans play a home and home series with Orchard Park on Wednesday, May 9 and Thursday, May 10 and are at Lancaster on Friday May 11. All three games have 4:45 p.m. starts.

e-mail: pnagy@beenews.com

Sweet Home still looking for first win of season

by **PATRICK J. NAGY**
Reporter

They're getting closer but Sweet Home baseball team has yet to win a game this season.

The Panthers are 0-9 in ECIC Division I, 0-10 overall.

"Obviously, our record is what it is, but the kids have stayed positive and given every ounce of effort that they can," said Sweet Home coach Derek Zgoda. "It's not like we're laying down for other teams, and I'm proud of them for that. To their credit, they've stayed strong through adversity."

If the Panthers had timely hitting last week, they could have

won several of the games they lost. In a 1-0 defeat against Jamestown on Monday, April 30, Sweet Home had runners on second base three times but could not score. Travis Denman and Aaron Klein were the only Panther batters who hit. Denman pitched a complete four-hitter, allowed the only run of the game in the third inning, struck out three, and walked four.

In 6-3 losses against West Seneca West on Wednesday, May 2 and Orchard Park on Thursday, May 3, the difference was Sweet Home left more runners on base and their opponents capitalized on scoring opportunities. Sweet Home left seven runners on base

to West Seneca West's three and six more runners than OP.

"I'm happy with the progress of our hitting, but we're not capitalizing when we have runners in scoring position," said Zgoda.

Sweet Home led West Seneca West 3-0 after the second inning after Ryan Maxwell singled and scored on a Chris Hammer fielder's choice, Brandon Hudson scored on a double steal, and Ryan Gutt scored on a passed ball.

Derek Wiser finished with two base hits and two stolen bases. Craig Young also singled. Maxwell only gave up five base hits pitching.

Sweet Home led OP 3-2 after the top of the third before OP

answered with two runs in the bottom of the inning. Gutt (3 for 4, stolen base, RBI) and Maxwell (3 for 3, RBI) led the Sweet Home offense. Sophomore Casey Kacz allowed nine hits in the loss.

Sweet Home faced OP on Friday, May 4 and lost 10-9 in eight innings. Sweet Home outhit OP, 13-10, and battled from a 9-5 deficit to tie the game at 9-9 with a run in the sixth and three runs in the seventh.

In the sixth, Pappagallo reached base on an error and scored on a fielder's choice by Mile Wolcott. In the seventh, Maxwell walked and scored on a Pappagallo single, Hudson scored on a Young sacrifice fly, and Pappagallo scored on

a two-out RBI single by Gutt. Gutt finished with three hits, scored twice, and stole a base. Maxwell was 2 for 3 with two RBIs. Klein was 2 for 4 with an RBI.

After a rough start, Wiser, who allowed seven hits and five runs over the first two innings, settled down and gave up one more run in his time on the mound.

Sweet Home played at Williamsville North on Monday, May 7 but results were unavailable before The Bee went to press. The Panthers host Lancaster, Jamestown, and Frontier, from Wednesday, May 9 to Friday, May 11.

e-mail: pnagy@beenews.com

Amherst experiences roller coaster of emotions

by **PATRICK J. NAGY**
Reporter

You name the type of game and the Amherst Central baseball team more than likely experienced it last week.

The Tigers came from behind to win, were almost no-hit and lost and were dominated at times throughout its five games played.

"When I got on the bus or headed to the field, I was asking myself, what team is going to show up today?" said Tigers coach Brian Davis.

Amherst's roller coaster week saw the team split league games with Hamburg and Williamsville East before a tough outing at Lake Shore.

The Tigers opened the week with a 7-2 road win at Hamburg on Monday, April 30. With the game tied at 2-2, Amherst scored five runs in the fourth inning, four courtesy of a grand slam home run from the bat of Andrew Hays. Hays finished 2 for 3 with four RBIs and scored twice.

Derek Duke pitched a complete game five-hitter for the win. He allowed one earned run and struck out one batter.

The rematch on Thursday, May 3 at Amherst was a game the Tigers could have won had it not been for mistakes in the field. Amherst committed 11 errors, eight between third base and shortstop, enroute to a 10-7, eight-inning defeat.

Trailing 5-1, Amherst scored five runs in the bottom of the fifth, beginning with a run by Will Gowen, to take a 6-5 lead. In the bottom of the seventh, Geoff Gallson tied the score at 7-7 when he scored after the Hamburg pitcher balked.

Hamburg scored three times in the top of the eighth.

Amherst had the tying run on first in the bottom of the eighth but could not advance the runner.

Shaun Garus threw six innings and allowed seven hits and two earned runs. Duke got the loss, striking out four over the last two innings.

As a team, the Tigers only had four hits.

The Tigers' games with East were two different stories. On Tuesday, May 1, East's Zach Miller flirted with a no-hitter until the seventh as the Flames defeated Amherst, 2-1, at the Pepsi Center. The next day, Amherst came back from a 9-3 deficit to win 12-11 at home.

In the first Amherst-East meeting, Miller threw 79 pitches, including 56 for strikes. Miller had nine strikeouts, improving his record to 4-0 with a 1.544 ERA. He also has thrown 21 strikeouts in 22.2 innings pitched. Opposing batters are hitting .134.

Duke and Andrew Gibson had Amherst's only hits off Miller. Duke's was an RBI single that brought in Gowen.

East banged out seven hits with Nick Weigel leading the way with a pair of singles. Eric Charlton's RBI single in the fourth knocked in Mark Guenther for the winning run.

Amherst's Mike Yanity threw a complete game five-hitter, allowing one earned run and striking out one batter.

Down 9-3, the Tigers scored seven runs in the sixth in the team's second meeting to go ahead, 10-9. Alex Dusenberry, Tom Ponticelli, Gowen, Duke, Zach Willet, Brandon Jeffords and Gallson all scored. East committed three of its five errors in the inning.

"The key was we were putting the ball into play," said Davis. "We also stole three bases and one of our batters was hit."

East tied the score in the seventh. Miller, who reached

first base on a strikeout when the ball got away from the catcher, stole second and scored on a Gary Styn double.

East took an 11-10 lead in the top of the eighth after Guenther led off with a triple and Chris Schiumo laid down a safety squeeze. In the bottom of the eighth, a Chris Eyeington single scored Ponticelli and with the bases loaded, Jeffords was walked on four straight pitches for the winning run.

"As we started to turn it around in the sixth, the team got fired up and we could see if we played our game, we could beat them," said Davis.

Davis said Hays and Jeffords held East to six hits and his team had nine hits at the plate. East coach Jerry Gasz disagreed, saying his team out hit Amherst, 14-11. According to Gasz, Mike Zeoli had three hits and Mike Ferguson, Eric Charlton and Styn had two hits each.

Eyeington was 3 for 5 for Amherst, including the game-tying RBI in the eighth. Duke was 3 for 4 with three runs scored.

Amherst closed out the week with a surprising 24-6 loss at Lake Shore on Friday, May 4. The Tigers trailed 10-0 after the second inning and 15-0 after the third inning.

"We made errors, not a ton, but they definitely outplayed us," said Davis. "It was the first time all year that our pitching did not come through."

Heading into the Lake Shore game, Amherst's pitching staff had an ERA under three.

Amherst (3-8, 3-6) played at Newfane on Monday, May 7 but results were unavailable before The Bee went to press. The Tigers travel to Williamsville South on Wednesday, May 9 and host Iroquois on Friday, May 11. Both games are 4:30 p.m. starts.

e-mail: pnagy@beenews.com