

Zephyrs fall in A-7 opener

WESTCO faces must win today against Hastings

By JEREMY WOZNICK

Star-Herald Sports Reporter

KEARNEY — In search of its first state-tournament berth since 2007, the WESTCO Zephyrs face a must-win situation today in the second day of the Class A, Area 7 Senior Baseball Tournament at Memorial Field in Kearney.

After dropping an 18-8 setback to North Platte in Thursday's opening round, the Zephyrs will look to extend their season with a win against Hastings, which lost x-x to Kearney.

Today's elimination game will get underway at 4 p.m. The winner remains alive in the tournament. But more importantly, the winner of the contest also earns a spot in next week's state tournament.

"I hope we're ready to play because we have a chance to extend our season," said Zephyrs coach Mark Moran, whose team now stands at 33-13. "If we're not ready to play, our season will be over."

Moran will send Joe Sanchez to the mound to start today's game. Sanchez owns a record of 10-0. Eric Moreno, who has a record of 9-2, will be next in line in the rotation for the nine-inning game. Moran said about everybody is available to pitch if needed.

"We'll do whatever we can to stay in this thing," Moran said.

Thursday's opener couldn't have started much better for the Zephyrs as they bolted to a 3-0 lead in the top of the first. However, things only went downhill from there as North Platte scored three runs of its own in the bottom of the first before adding six more runs in the second.

"It was a good start for us," Moran said. "But then we gave them three runs right back and then they put up six in the second inning."

WESTCO didn't go quietly as it chipped North Platte's lead to just one at 9-8 in the top of the sixth. But North Platte erupted for three runs in the bottom of the sixth before tacking on six more in the seventh to put a halt to the game early.

“We didn’t pitch very well and we didn’t play defense very well,” Moran said. “We out-hit them really for the whole game, but we allowed 10 walks and hit two guys. We just didn’t play very well.”

The Zephyrs pounded out 10 hits in the game.

Sanchez went 3-for-3 with a double and three runs scored, while Nate Goodwin finished 2-for-3 with four runs batted in and two runs scored. Goodwin blasted his 15th home run in the fifth to extend his single-season record. He also now has a total of 74 runs batted in and is just one away from tying the single-season record in that category.

Tre Meier also finished the game with multiple hits as he went 2-for-3 with a double and two runs batted in.

Brian Colburn also had a double for the Zephyrs.

Jordon Enderle led North Platte offensively with two hits and five runs batted in.

James McCain earned the win on the mound. He struck out three in 5 2/3 innings of work. Joe Smidt struck out all four hitters he faced after the Zephyrs closed within 9-8 in the sixth.

Connor Wilburn took the loss on the mound for the Zephyrs. He allowed six earned runs on six hits and struck out three in 3 1/3 innings. Beau Lofink allowed five earned runs on five hits and struck out three in relief.

Zephyrs (33-13) 300 023 0 — 8 10 4

North Platte 360 003 6 — 18 11 3

WP — McCain. LP — Wilburn (3-5).

HR — Goodwin. 2B — Colburn, Meier, Sanchez, Ostergard, Williams (2), Enderle, Smidt (2).