

Late-Inning Magic Aids Post 12 Again State

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK
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If Yankton is going to win the title at the South Dakota State American Legion Baseball Tournament, you might want to bet that the number seven will be involved in it.

On Thursday, Yankton scored 10 in the seventh to beat Garretson. Friday, Yankton scored five in the seventh to beat Watertown. Saturday at Riverside Field, First Dakota Post 12's big inning wasn't in the seventh, but was seven runs in an 11-5 victory over Brookings.

For the fourth straight game, Yankton found itself in a hole to start the contest.

In the first inning, Landon Busch followed leadoff hits by Matt Thomas and Gunner Peterson with a run-scoring groundout. Marcus Daniel and Riley Bullington added RBI singles to put the Bandits up 3-0. Busch and Daniel drove in runs again in the second as Brookings stretched to a 5-0 edge off Yankton starter Mike Janish.

"We definitely started well after a tough one Friday night," said Brookings head coach Rob Hirschhoff. "We had our chances at the plate after that, and we needed to keep putting the pressure on."

Yankton head coach Robb McCleman felt Janish, who had left a start Tuesday after 2 1/3 innings due to an elbow injury, did what Post 12 needed him to do.

"He did a good job of setting the tone," McCleman said. "They could have had a couple of big innings."

Yankton went to the bullpen in the third, bringing in Jordan Groves. Groves, who came into the state tournament with a 10.04 ERA, held the high-scoring Bandits to just two hits in four innings of work.

"My arm just felt better than my first time out," Groves said, referring to his first tournament appearances, when he gave up four runs in an inning against Rapid City Post 22. "I was more focused. I was just trying to help get us to the championship game."

While Groves was keeping the Bandits off home plate, Yankton was chipping away at the deficit. In the fifth, Alex Mueller singled and Kory Bromley doubled for Yankton's first run. Singles by Cameron Schiltz, Devin Gullikson and Alec Sprakel gave Post 12 its second run.

"At least we started to score before the seventh inning today," McCleman said. Yankton had scored just one run prior to the seventh inning in its first three state tournament games. "Right after they



Yankton runner Cody Ulmer, left, dives back to first while Brookings first baseman Kyle Kramer awaits the throw during their game Saturday afternoon at the S.D. State Legion Tournament at Riverside Field. Yankton rallied for an 11-5 victory to advance to Sunday's championship.

scored, we told the kids that we had been down this road before. They didn't hit panic mode."

Yankton finally chased Brookings starter Joey Texley in the seventh, after a Mueller single and a Davis double pulled Post 12 within two. Trevor Bailey scored Davis on a grounder, cutting the deficit to one.

Alex Wagner kept Brookings in check for two more innings, giving Yankton one last chance to keep its season alive. After Mueller and Davis reached, Cody Ulmer ripped a double to tie the game. Brookings cut down a potential go-ahead run at the plate, leaving the bases loaded. Steve Stange stood in next, and was hit in the face by a pitch by Daniel to bring in the go-ahead run. Stange stayed in the game, but a rattled Daniel hit Schiltz on the next pitch to give Yankton a two-run lead.

Brookings went to Kramer, who gave up a two-run double to Sprakel. Two more runs scored on Bandits errors, setting the margin at six entering the bottom of the ninth.

Singles by Peterson and Busch sandwiched a walk to Kelby Beste loaded the bases and sent Yankton to the bullpen for Tanner Termanen. The youngster who spent the entire summer on the Black Sox VFW Teener roster retired the next three batters, sending Brookings home.

"Wagner was throwing for the third straight day, and he gave us all he had," McCleman said. "Tanner came on in a tough spot, especially for a young pitcher."

Davis, who came on in the fifth, went 3-4 with two doubles and two RBI to lead Yankton. Ulmer, Sprakel and Mueller each had two hits.

Peterson had a double and two singles for Brookings. Thomas, Daniel and Texley each had two hits for the Bandits.

Wagner picked up his second win of the state tournament. Daniel took the loss.

Yankton's improbable run — three straight elimination game victories — continued to the state championship game against Sioux Falls East on Sunday.

"We're all excited to go to the

championship," Groves noted. "Hopefully we can win it all. We'll go at them hard."

No matter how Sunday turns out, this run — and this season — has been special.

"We have 11 seniors and for all of them to stick it out all these years is great," McCleman said. "It's an awesome feeling, them being rewarded for all their hard work. You don't have classes that have this many kids stick it out."

"They may not have the overall record of some of the 'top' teams to come through here, but they have been very competitive at tournament time. It's fun to see."

Brookings sees its successful season come to an end. The Bandits finished with a 30-14 mark.

"This has been a successful season. This is a great group of kids. They've been a real pleasure to coach," Hirschhoff said. "It's been a few years since a Brookings team has made it this far in the state tournament. Hopefully someday, when the pain of this loss goes away, it's something these kids are proud of."



Yankton pitcher Tanner Termanen pumps his fist after closing out Post 12's victory over Brookings at the South Dakota State American Legion Baseball Tournament, Saturday at Yankton's Riverside Field. Yankton won 11-5, earning just the second state title game berth in the program's history.

Golf

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"I played more solid today, I didn't make any bogeys today which is a good thing," he said. "I have an ongoing bet with my grandma so if I don't make any bogeys, she gives me 10 bucks."

After playing together on the Golf Channel's "Big Break" TV show, Rodriguez said he didn't have the best relationship with Beisser heading into the tournament.

"In 2007, we hated each other. We've said hello and been cordial to each other, but I was wondering how it was going to go today," Rodriguez said. "After 18, we both said we have a new perspective on each other. You mature a lot in four years."

On the amateur side, Marc Gubbels had a strong tournament, shooting a better score than 55 of the pros. After finishing the first round with a 66 (just two strokes shy of the first round's professional leader), Gubbels would finish the three rounds with an overall score of 208, eight strokes under par.

"I feel pretty good, I stayed under par so I'm pretty happy," Gubbels said.

In his second year of playing the tournament, Gubbels said this weekend was not what he was expecting.

"Last year I played a lot worse, so it feels nice to play this good," he said. "I don't usually play this good, kind of a lucky weekend."

Being able to stay under par through three rounds, Gubbels said he only had one hole where he struggled.

"It was all pretty solid. Today I four-putted #12, it was probably the worst hole I had all week. It was stupid, made mental errors, just didn't take my time," Gubbels said. "The pins the first day were a lot harder than the last two, but I thought it was pretty easy overall."

Adam Walsh finished second in gross scores with 213 after shooting two under par on the final day. Heading into the third round five strokes behind Gubbels, Walsh said he was looking to stay close to the lead.

"When you have that much of a gap, you just want to go out with an open mind and try to make as many birdies as you can to try to make up some ground," he said. "I could've had some better holes, some of them got the best of me, but it still feels good to come out and shoot a couple under."

Bob Glowcheski finished first in net scores, where players' handicaps are taken into account, with 206. In team standings, Joe Sparks, Nate Dimmer and Ryan Schaefer took first with a score of 366.

S.F. East Eliminates Rapid City Post 22

BY JEREMY HOECK
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Something had to give. The potent offense of Sioux Falls East had scored 48 runs in three previous games, while the stingy pitching of Rapid City Post 22 had allowed five runs.

Eventually, East's offense came around and eliminated two-time defending champion Rapid City 8-4 Saturday night at the S.D. State Legion Tournament at Riverside Field.

"Baseball has a funny way of evening itself out," S.F. East coach Brandon Hunt said. "We had to keep a level head and stay positive."

In a game in which the tournament's leading offense didn't get on the scoreboard until the seventh inning, it was Jon Handers' RBI single in that frame that capped a 4-run inning as East pulled ahead for good.

"Our entire approach all season has been to be aggressive," Hunt said. "And early on, you could tell the guys were a little passive. It looked like we were going through the motions."

"But we told the guys, (E)Continue to be aggressive and get back to East baseball."

With East already having secured a spot in the final, the bats that had rolled through three games were held in check for the first.

For the first six innings at least.

And it was all thanks mostly to the pitching of Jake Sullivan.

The Post 22 right-hander limited East to six hits in six innings, but hit a wall in the bottom of the seventh. East got a leadoff runner to first on an error, followed by a walk and an RBI single by Brooks Cross — cutting the deficit to 3-1.

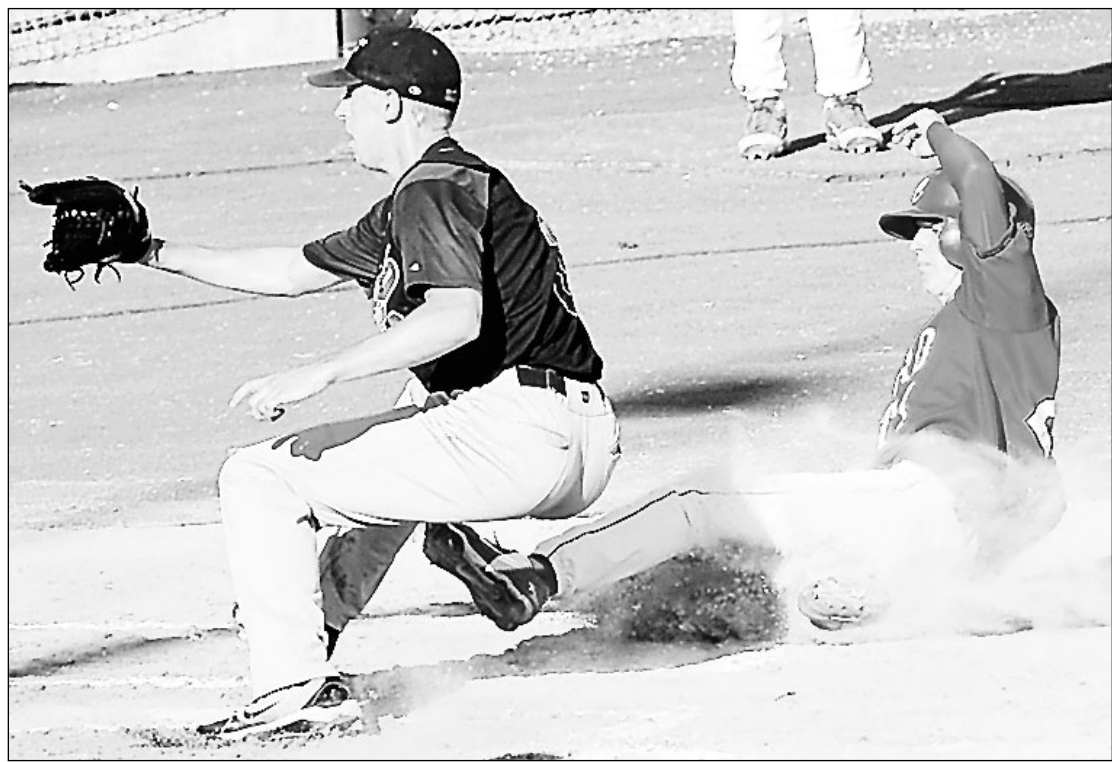
Cole Halgerson tied the game on a 2-run double two batters later, and Handers gave East the lead with the RBI single.

"They played the game all the way through better than us," said Rapid City Post 22 coach Dave Ploof, whose team ends its season at 45-20.

"So they got the win and we got the (loss)."

Though he wasn't allowing Rapid City to hit anything hard, East starter Michael Hout still had trouble finding the strike zone early in the game.

In the top of the first inning, the left-hander threw three wild



Rapid City Post 22 baserunner Jacob James, right, scores on a wild pitch by Sioux Falls East's Michael Hout, covering, during the first inning of their matchup in the South Dakota State American Legion Baseball Tournament, Saturday at Yankton's Riverside Field.

itches to allow Post 22 to score a run — thanks to back-to-back walks to start the game.

Hout got out of a jam in the second after giving up consecutive singles with one out, but got two quick outs.

The next rough spot for Hout came in the top of the fifth, when he loaded the bases on a hit by pitch, an error and another walk. Jacob James scored on another wild pitch, pushing Post 22 ahead 2-0.

Jake Bohne then drove in the third run on an RBI sacrifice fly to center.

East, meanwhile, had issues taking advantage of lead-off baserunners. In the second, fourth and fifth innings, East got the first runner to first but couldn't bring him around.

That all changed in the bottom of the seventh. "I'm proud of the way they fought through it," Hunt said. East added four runs in the eighth on a Connor Schaefer RBI single, a Halgerson RBI single and a 2-run single from Handers.

"We made too many mistakes all the way through, so it wasn't just one thing," Ploof said. "In this game, you win as a team and lose the same way."

The 5-run cushion for East proved to be more than enough.

Post 22 got a two-out RBI double from cleanup hitter Newt Johnson in the bottom of the ninth, but an Alex Schultz strike-out of Bohne ended the game.

And for Post 22, its bid for a third straight championship.

Winners of the last two state legion tournaments, Rapid City heads home short of the 2011 tournament's final day after losing its second game.

"We didn't play up to our capabilities all tournament," Ploof said. "And if you don't play the game the way you're capable of,

you have to look at yourself from the inside-out."

East's coach knows all about that mentality from Ploof, as Hunt played for Post 22 nearly a decade ago.

"It feels good, regardless of the circumstance," Hunt said of beating his former team. "I feel extremely blessed to come from that program."

The victory meant that East was to host home town sensation Yankton First Dakota Post 12, which made a somewhat surprising run to the state championship game on Sunday.

It's the first of the month...

August

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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lenced," said Hunt.

The top of the seventh marked a turnaround in the game as East scored three runs on three hits to take a 5-1 lead over Post 12.

Yankton made a pitching change in the top of the 8th inning. Zach Benjamin replaced Teichroew. Benjamin shut down Sioux Falls with a 1-2-3 inning.

The bottom of the eighth inning sparked some glimmerings of a 2-out rally by Yankton as Alex Mueller scored on a double steal. East shut the door on the rally and Yankton ended the eighth inning with one run, two hits, zero errors, and one man left on.

Sioux Falls East came out in the top of the 9th to score three runs and held Yankton scoreless in the bottom of the 9th to finalize their state championship with a 8-2 victory.

"It was great getting those runs in the later innings, because it took a lot of pressure off," said Schultz.

Yankton won a couple upsets in the tournament to get to the championship game, but were just unable to do it against the dangerous lineup of Sioux Falls East.

"It was nice to see how they embraced it and how they enjoyed it, once we got that first win you could kind of see that they started to believe a little bit. Then one game led to the next and it just kept rolling from there," said Yankton head coach Robb McCleman.

"So much of it is on the seniors," he added. "They did a great job of getting each other ready to play and kept each other loose and had a lot of fun doing it."

East was led at the plate by Schaeferbauer, who went 4-5 with three runs and three RBIs. Schaeferbauer finished the tournament with a .577 batting average.

Alex Schultz went 2-4 on the day with an RBI and a walk. Schultz finished the tournament with a .542 batting average. Brooks Cross went 2-4 with two RBIs and a run on the day. Cross hit .522 for the tournament. Risse had two hits in four at bats and two runs during the championship game. Risse hit .455 for the tournament.

"They are a group of great kids, they are great athletes and overall have been a joy to work with. It is a true team effort and I am proud of how they did today," said Hunt.

"They push each other, not in a way that they want to be better than each other, but they consistently push each other to be better. They just love to compete, and that just shows something about their character and about the way they just like to play the game," he added.

Yankton was led by Gullikson, who went 2-4 with a double, and an RBI. Gullikson hit for a .421 average for the tournament. Schiltz went 1-3 with a run. Schiltz had a .421 batting average for the tournament. Mueller had one hit on three at bats, with a run during the championship game, while maintaining a .350 average for the tournament.

Schultz was awarded the 2011 Player of the Year award, and Carter Wevik of Rapid City Post 22 was awarded the 2011 Big Stick award.

"I couldn't be more happy for Alex, he is one of those competitor type kids where when you give him the ball on the mound in a game like this, today did not surprise me he has been doing that all year for us," said Hunt.

Yankton ends its season with a 30-22 record and a state runner-up trophy, only the program's second-ever appearance in the title game (1999).

"We want to thank everyone from the community for the support," McCleman said.

Sioux Falls East will be enjoying the victory for only a short while, as will travel to Dickinson, N.D. to play in the Central Plains Regional Tournament on Thursday.

"We are going to enjoy this one for a day or two, but I have a funny feeling that this team is not done winning yet. These guys expect great things out of each other and we are not going to lay down we are going to give it everything we have got," Hunt said.

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Monday, August 1
7:40 am Yankton County Commission
8:15 am L&C Theater

Tuesday, August 2
7:40 am Yankton Library (Kathy Jacobs)
8:15 am Riverboat Days
8:45 am Dakota Territorial Museum (Crystal Nelson)