

Baseball | South Central League Notebook

First-Place Crofton Got ‘Creative’ With Pitching

BY JEREMY HOECK
jeremy.hoeck@yankton.net

CROFTON, Neb. – Few amateur baseball teams have been as consistently successful in the Class B ranks over the past half-decade than the Crofton Bluejays.

And the key over the years has been a deep pitching staff. Not one quality pitcher. Not two. But, at times, three and four quality arms.

This summer, however, the Bluejays have had to piece together a staff after the departures of long-time, big-game pitchers Scot Donner and Seth Erdmann.

“You have to get creative once in a while,” manager Carl Schieffer said Monday.

And it’s worked.

First-place Crofton has won nine straight South Central League games after an 0-2 start and will host Wynot (8-3) for Friday night’s annual pre-Fourth of July showdown.

Down two regular starting pitchers, the Bluejays have turned to veteran Rand Thygeson to eat more innings, as well as Nick Hegge, Ben Hegge, Alex Mueller and Gage Rethwisch.

“We’re finding ourselves,” Schieffer said. “Not that we were lost, but we needed everyone to get in a spot so they could get a feel for things.”

online

■ The Press & Dakotan Will Have Full Coverage Of Friday Night’s Wynot At Crofton Game.

Sure, there are other possibilities to take the ball for Crofton, but the team not only hasn’t really needed others to step in as of yet, but Schieffer said he wanted to develop some kind of routine for the last month of the season.

“Figuring out your depth is probably the biggest thing in amateur baseball,” he said. “Once you get comfortable, that’s when you start playing better ball.”

That’s exactly what has happened.

Crofton began the South Central League season with consecutive losses to Class A Yankton (3-1) and a puzzling loss to Freeman (12-0). Two weeks later, the ship had been righted.

“At first, we weren’t quite ready,”

Schieffer said. “Guys are starting to realize that now. They’re getting it figured out.”

The proof is in the comparison.

Last season, Crofton went 17-1 in league action and allowed 1.56 runs per game, on the way to a run to the state semifinals. This season through 11 league games, Crofton is allowing 2.73 runs per game – second behind Yankton (2.7).

That’s a key reason why the Bluejays are in first place. They are scoring 6.9 runs per game, fourth-best in the league. Picking up that pace is the next task for the Bluejays, Schieffer said.

“I’m a little bit worried about the run support right now,” he said.

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SCL At A Glance

	W	L	PCT
Crofton	9	2	.818
Yankton	8	2	.800
Wynot	8	3	.727
Irene	6	4	.600
Freeman	5	4	.556
Menno	5	5	.500
Lesterville	3	8	.273
Tabor	2	7	.222
Scotland	0	11	.000

Wednesday, July 1

Wynot at Freeman

Friday, July 3

Tabor at Lesterville

Wynot at Crofton

Saturday, July 4

Lesterville at Yankton

Scotland at Menno

Sunday, July 5

Tabor at Freeman

Scotland at Irene

Post 12 Falls At Home

Sioux Falls Post 307 got started early and held on to beat Yankton Post 12 by a 7-2 decision Monday night in American Legion baseball action at Bob Tereshinski Stadium at Riverside Field.

Post 307 (Renner Royals) scored two runs in the top of the first inning and had a 6-1 lead after three innings.

Colin Muth had two hits for Yankton (19-7), while Brad Ulmer doubled and scored, and Landon Withrow had a hit and a run scored. Tanner Watts, Jordan Kathol, Ben Cameron and Wyatt Adam all added a hit.

Yankton is back in action tonight (Tuesday) for a 6 p.m. game in Harrisburg.

Tabor 17, Menno 2

TABOR – Chase Kortan, Cole Uecker and Carter Mecham all had three hits as Tabor rolled past Menno 17-2 in American Legion baseball action Monday in Tabor.

Mace Merkwan and Sawyer Schmitz both added a pair of hits for Tabor (4-3). Schmitz threw three scoreless innings of relief to get the win.

Brody Bierle singled for Menno.

Tabor hosts Winner-Colome tonight (Tuesday) at 7 p.m.

Amateurs

Yankton 16, Scotland 1

SCOTLAND – Nik Davis had four hits and Jason Livermont added three more as the Yankton Tappers rolled past Scotland 16-1 in South Central League amateur action from Sunday night in Scotland.

Davis and Livermont each doubled twice, while Kenny Tomek, Mike Janish, Devin Gullikson, Kory Bromley and Kaleb Bromley all added two hits for Yankton (8-2). Tomek pitched the first seven innings and was relieved by Kory Bromley.

For Scotland (0-11), Wyatt Brown tripled, Sawyer Schmitz had a hit and Paul Plante took the loss.

Both teams return to action Saturday, with Yankton hosting Lesterville and Scotland visiting Menno.

Wynot 14, Tabor 1

TABOR – Eric Hames struck out 10 in a complete game effort and Chase Rolfes

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JEREMY HOECK/P&D

Yankton Post 12 shortstop Sheldon Gant, left, tags out Sioux Falls Post 307 baserunner Chandler Schaeffbauer during their American Legion game Monday night at Bob Tereshinski Stadium at Riverside Field.

US-Germany Semifinal Features Top Goalies

MONTREAL (AP) — The Women’s World Cup semifinal clash between top-ranked Germany and the second-ranked United States will feature two of the best goalkeepers in the game: Nadine Angerer and Hope Solo.

The two women will be the last line of defense Tuesday night for their teams, with is each seeking a spot in the final match. Historically, when the Germans have met the Americans in the World Cup, the winner has gone on to win the title.

Both teams have won it all twice: The United States in 1991 and ‘99, and the Germans in 2003 and ‘07.

Solo, despite being inundated at the start of the tournament with new revelations about her domestic violence arrest last June, has been nearly

perfect. She has only allowed one goal — in the first half of the group-stage opener against Australia.

Since then she’s posted four straight shutouts. The stout U.S. defense hasn’t conceded a goal in 423 minutes. Solo leads all goalkeepers at the World Cup with 11 saves.

In the 1-0 quarterfinal victory over China, Solo surpassed Briana Scurry for most wins by a U.S. goalkeeper with 134.

“Hope’s absolutely world class,” midfielder Heather O’Reilly said. “We’re proud of her for that accomplishment. I know she has a big one in mind, and that’s to win the World Cup.”

Angerer, the former FIFA Player of the Year who was the first goalkeeper to win the award, started for Germany

in the 2007 World Cup and did not allow a goal on the way to the title, setting a World Cup record for most minutes played (540) without a goal.

Angerer has nine saves in Canada. Germany has conceded three goals.

“I think a lot of people have respect for her,” U.S. defender Ali Krieger said. “She’s consistent, she’s confident, she does her job really well and she’s the leader of that team. They really look to her for making those MVP plays, and consistently does that at the right times.”

Angerer, 36, has said she plans to retire following the World Cup.

MAKING A STATEMENT ON FIELD: Hope Solo hasn’t spoken to reporters at

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Torres Back In Omaha, Where Her Long Swim Career Ended

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Dara Torres showed up at the CenturyLink Center on Monday to promote the 2016 U.S. Olympic Swim Trials.

No, the ageless Torres isn’t making another comeback. She was in Omaha as a goodwill ambassador this time.

“It’s a little different to be here as someone talking about the Olympic trials and not actually being in the Olympic trials,” Torres said. “But I’m actually OK with it. I think I finally got it all out of my system.”

The five-time Olympian ended her competitive career here during the 2012 trials, finishing fourth in the 50-meter freestyle. She was nine-hundredths of a second away from making the U.S. team at age 45.

Except for a few hours on April Fool’s Day — when she tweeted she was coming out of retirement — there has been no question her days as an elite swimmer are over.

“Right when I climbed out of the water the last trials, it was ‘OK, that’s it. I’m done,’ ” she said. “I didn’t look back since then.”

The 2016 trials — set for June 26 to July 3 — will be the third straight time the trials have been held in Omaha. It likely will be 22-time Olympic medalist Michael Phelps’ last meet in the United States. On the women’s side, all eyes will be on stars Katie Ledecky and Missy Franklin.

A sidelight will be Natalie Coughlin’s attempt to make the Olympic team for a fourth time. She needs one more medal to give her 13 and break the record she shares with Torres and Jenny Thompson for most decorated U.S. women’s swimmer.

Attendance for the eight-day trials went from 160,000 in 2008 to 164,000 in 2012. Omaha Sports Commission president Harold Cliff said the goal is to reach 170,000 and tickets went on sale Monday. In addition to seats good for all 15 sessions from \$350 to \$550, there again will be 100 all-session “Victory Row” seats on the pool deck for \$1,100.

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Wrigley Field Scoreboard Operator Enjoys Job

BY RHIANNON WALKER
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In the early stages of Wrigley Field’s extensive renovation, questions swirled about what would happen to the old center-field scoreboard as two new video boards were being placed on both sides of it.

Fred Washington, a member of the grounds crew for the Cubs who has worked the scoreboard for 25 years, never was concerned about its future.

“The scoreboard will be here forever,” he said. “I never worry about anything replacing that scoreboard.”

The West Side native has been working inside the center-field board since 1990 and at the ballpark since 1984. Washington has worked every job on the grounds crew but now focuses on hosing down the dugouts and warning track aside from his scoreboard duties. The 64-year-old also raises the “W” and “L” flags after games.

When Washington started working the scoreboard, it was considered a promotion because he got extra pay. He doesn’t remember the opponent on his first day inside the scoreboard, but it wasn’t because the occasion lacked excitement.



JOHN J. KIM/CHICAGO TRIBUNE/TNS

Scoreboard operator Freddy Washington, 64, looks out from the original Wrigley Field scoreboard last Thursday in Chicago.

One of Washington’s colleagues dropped one of the numbered metal plates on a group of fans, and the man slid back into his seat

out of embarrassment. Washington then had to bring the unscathed plate to his bosses and tell them he wasn’t the culprit.

From inside the scoreboard, Washington said you can look left, right or straight ahead and won’t miss a thing — it’s the best seat in

the house. If it’s cold outside, it’s very cold in there; if the wind is blowing straight out, it’s blowing straight in his face; if it’s hot, then it’s very hot.

The fans help Washington out if he misses anything, though he hasn’t missed much from his seat above the “8.”

He remembers the Steve Bartman game, the 1998 home run record chase between Sammy Sosa and Mark McGwire and the lights being installed for night games in 1988. To Washington’s knowledge, there never has been a home run that hit the scoreboard.

The best part of Washington’s job, he said, without a doubt is pleasing the fans.

“I take pride in what I do,” he said. “We want the place to look beautiful, and if it doesn’t, then we put more effort into it until it does.”

And no matter what the Cubs add to Wrigley, he knows the center-field scoreboard isn’t going anywhere.

“It’s a landmark,” Washington said. “These video boards they’re going to make money, they’re going to get attention, but those can be moved. That center-field scoreboard will always be there.”