

Steam pound Lake Erie 14-6 in game two to earn doubleheader split

Cincinnati scored 11 times in the final two innings of the second game

July 26, 2009

Game One (7 innings)

WESTERN HILLS, Ohio—Lake Erie scored twice in the final two innings to break a 3-3 tie and defeat the Steam 5-4 in the first game of a Sunday afternoon doubleheader at Western Hills High School. Down a run, the Steam had the bases loaded with one out in the bottom of the seventh inning, but Tim Corbey (Dayton) entered the game and induced Brad Gschwind (Miami) to ground into a game-ending 4-6-3 twin killing. Cincinnati had won nine of their past 11 games against the Monarchs.

Reece Asbury (Miami) fell one out shy of a complete game, tossing 6.2 innings and giving up five runs (three earned) on seven hits in the loss. Asbury (1-4) walked three and struck out two, throwing 79 pitches (48 strikes). Had Asbury finished the contest, it would have marked his first complete game as a collegiate pitcher in 13 starts (10 with the Steam, three with the Redhawks).

Chad Yinger (Oakland), who at 6-8 is the tallest player in the league (along with teammate Andrew Parker), started for the Monarchs and worked 4.0 innings before exiting with an elbow injury. Yinger allowed two earned runs on four hits while striking out two without a walk. Brian Koehl (Heidelberg) worked 2.1 innings in relief of Yinger for the victory (3-2), allowing two runs (one earned) on three hits. Corbey recorded the save, remarkably the first for any Monarch pitcher this season in 26 games.

Trace Voshell (Ohio) continued his hot hitting, going 2-for-3 with a double, and RBI, and a run scored. He is now batting .500 (8-for-16) during his current six-game hitting streak (after opening the season 3-for-22). T.J. Jones (Cincinnati) also had two hits, a double, an RBI, and a run scored, and Tim Issler (Ball State) hit an RBI single and scored a run. Ben Thomas (Xavier) walked twice and drove in a run, his seventh RBI in the past four games, but saw his eight-game hitting streak come to a close.

Kolbrin Vitek (Ball State) and Ryan Clark (Penn State) paced the Monarchs in the victory; Vitek went 3-for-4 with a double and Clark notched two hits and two RBI (on a second-inning two-run home run).

Asbury did not get off to a good start in the first inning, yielding two singles and a walk to load the bases with nobody out, but bounced back, inducing a tailor-made ground ball double play off the bat of Matt Dittman (Illinois) to hold the Monarchs to just a run in the inning.

Lake Erie took advantage of a Steam error in the second to take a 3-0 lead. After Issler could not handle Patrick Martin's (Bowling Green) hard smash to third with two outs, the free-swinging Clark smacked a two-run home run to left, the freshman's first home run as a collegiate player. Clark leads the league in strikeouts with 31 (in only 79 at bats).

The Steam had a chance to get on the board in the bottom half of the second inning, but Gschwind was tossed out at home plate by right fielder Doug Schumacher (Illinois). Gschwind singled and stood on second base with two outs when Voshell blooped a single to right, but Schumacher's throw beat Gschwind easily for the final out of the inning.

After Clark's long ball, Asbury retired seven batters in a row, needing just 10 pitches in the third and fourth innings combined.

The Steam scored three times in the fifth to tie the game on the strength of doubles by Voshell and Jones. Bobby Freking (Xavier) was hit by a pitch to begin the inning and advanced to second on a passed ball by Lake Erie catcher Dallas Burke (Iowa). Voshell then laced a double in the left-center field gap to plate Freking. After Yinger left the game with an elbow injury, Jones greeted Koehl with a double off the wall in right to get the Steam within one. After another passed ball by Burke, Issler tied the game with a single up the middle. Drew Schmidt (Xavier) hit a

one-out infield single and Thomas was walked intentionally to load the bases with two out, but Gschwind flied out to right to end the inning with the score knotted at three.

Lake Erie wasted no time in regaining the lead in the top of the sixth. Vitek crushed a double off the wall in right-center to get things started and moved to third on a ground ball to the right side by Dittman. Ryan McMillin (Western Michigan) then hit a sharp single past a drawn-in infield to give the Monarchs the 4-3 lead. Both Issler and Gschwind dove for the ground ball but came up empty.

The Monarchs added what turned out to be a key insurance run in the seventh. With runners on first and second and two men out, Burke lined a single to center to score Clark and chase Asbury from the game. A broken-bat single by Vitek loaded the bases, but Mitchell Reilly (Miami) retired Dittman on a groundout to end the threat.

In the final half-inning, Issler reached on an error to start things off, and Ryan Strausborger (Indiana State) followed with a four-pitch walk. After Schmidt moved both runners up a base with a sacrifice bunt, Koehl hit Jon Edgington (Miami) with a pitch to load the bases. Koehl issued another four-pitch walk to Thomas to force in a run before Corbey entered and finished off the game with the double play.

Game Two (9 innings)

The Steam pounded the Monarchs 14-6 in the second game on the strength of an eight-run seventh inning. The Steam sent 12 batters to the plate in the inning and took advantage of two Lake Erie errors, which made all eight runs unearned.

The Steam (19-11) entered the seventh inning down 4-3 and exited with a commanding 11-4 lead. After the first two batters of the inning were retired, nine consecutive Steam batters reached base. Edgington was plunked by a Mike Inselmann (Toledo) pitch to start the rally (the third hit batter of the game for Inselmann). Thomas then lined a single up the middle, setting up what was the key play of the inning. Gschwind hit a ground ball up the middle that was fielded by Vitek, who threw to first in time, but first baseman Dittman was late covering first base for some reason and was charged with an error when the throw squirted past him. Edgington scored on the play to tie the game, and the flood gates opened after that. Travis Shaw (Kent State) singled in a run to give the Steam a 5-4 lead, and Ryan Bellamy (Xavier) drove a double into the left-center field gap to plate Gschwind and Shaw and put the Steam up 7-4. After a walk to Freking, Cody Elliott (Ball State) singled in a run, and Strausborger laced a triple to right-center, the sixth of his career, to score two and increase the lead to 10-4. Strausborger crossed the plate for the final run of the inning when Vitek booted Schmidt's ground ball.

Mike Jefferson (Louisiana Tech) started for the Steam, giving up four earned runs on five hits in 4.2 innings. He walked three and struck out a career-high eight, raising his season total to 41 (second most in Steam history in a single-season behind Kadish's 44). Jefferson has now punched out 25 batters in his last four starts, spanning 15.2 innings. He has fanned at least five batters in each of those starts, despite the fact that today's start was his longest of the season.

Mike Peterson (DePauw) relieved Jefferson and picked up the win (3-0), pitching 2.2 innings and giving up two earned runs (both in the eighth inning after the Steam had taken the lead). Ryan Martin (Michigan State) actually picked up a save in the game after entering the game with the bases loaded and one out in the eighth and inducing an inning-ending double play (the Steam held a five-run lead at that point).

Starter Mike Inselmann (Toledo) was charged with the loss (0-2), largely due to four unearned runs. Inselmann gave up seven runs (three earned) on nine hits with one walk and four strikeouts. He also plunked three batters in the game.

Strausborger paced the Steam on offense, going 3-for-5 and falling a home run shy of the cycle. Strausborger is batting .444 (20-for-45) over his last 11 games with 14 runs scored. He knocked in two runs and scored twice to up his league-leading total to 35 (second place in the league has 24). Bellamy doubled, smacked his first Steam home run, and drove in five, which ties for the most by any player in the GLSCL this season (Thomas also drove in five in the season opener). Thomas went 2-for-3 with two runs scored and was hit by two pitches. He is batting .429 (12-

for-28) with 10 RBI over his last eight games. Shaw homered, drove in three, and scored three times, and Schmidt collected two hits.

Cincinnati jumped out to an early 1-0 lead in the first inning. Strausborger and Schmidt notched back-to-back singles to put runners on the corners with nobody out. Edgington then drove home Strausborger on a fielder's choice for the first run of the game.

Lake Erie (10-17) answered in the third with an unearned run to tie the game at one. After Martin singled to begin the frame, Jefferson had him picked off at first base, but the home plate umpire called a balk. Jefferson punched out Kevin Gillespie (Lincoln Trail) looking with Martin on third for the second out, but one batter later Vitek hit a ground ball to third that Shaw booted to allow Martin to score.

The Steam used the big sticks of Thomas and Shaw to take a 3-1 lead in the fourth inning. Thomas hit a frozen rope off the right field wall for a leadoff two-base hit. One out later, Shaw unloaded on an Inselmann pitch, hitting it halfway across the football practice field behind the right field fence for a two-run home run, his fourth of the season (second most in Steam history in a single season behind Tommy Nurre's five last year).

Lake Erie quickly tied the game and took the lead in the next half-inning. Clark and Gillespie singled to start the inning, and Burke ripped a triple over the head of Strausborger in left-center to knot the score. Burke came home to give the Monarchs a 4-3 lead on a ground ball to short by Vitek.

The Steam added three final runs to round out the scoring in the eighth when Bellamy drilled his first home run as a member of the Steam, a three-run bomb to left field.

The Steam return to action on Monday for a doubleheader with the Southern Ohio Copperheads (makeup for the Saturday rainout). First pitch of game one from Western Hills High School is scheduled for 4:05 p.m. Cincinnati boasts a current five-game winning streak versus the Copperheads, outscoring Southern Ohio 36-9 during that stretch.