



Post 1 could play up to 7 games in next 5 days

By Parker Knox
Sportswriter

Vermillion Post 1 is sure to play six American Legion baseball games within the next five days, but hopefully the total reaches seven.

Post 1 starts with a home doubleheader against Yankton tonight (Friday) at 5 p.m. Vermillion will then be in pool play at Rapid City Post 320's tournament on Sunday against Sheridan, WY, and in Monday games there against Post 320 and Canon City, CO. On Tuesday each team will be involved in a semifinal game, either in the championship bracket or the consolation bracket. A win there means an additional game that day for the championship in each of those brackets.

POST 1 - 12, BERESFORD 5

Helped along by the first two of eight Beresford errors and singles by Caleb Miller, Stormy Mirtz, Collin Bertram and Nate Garrett, Post 1 scored four in the first inning Tuesday night and never trailed in trimming their intra-region rivals, 12-5.

Beresford came right back with a three-run, three-hit second to draw close, but by the end of the fourth, Vermillion led 9-3. The closest Beresford would come again would be 9-5 after 5 1/2 innings.

Jayce Huska's infield grounder scored a run in the third. RBI hits by Mirtz and Bertram, a walk, a hit batter and four more Beresford errors constituted a four-run fifth. Tanner Anderson drove home a run in the seventh, and Garrett plated another in the eighth.

Starter Garrett got the pitching win, going five innings, striking out two, walking three and allowing seven hits and two earned runs. Nile Morecraft pitched the final four innings. He weathered a three-walk sixth with only one run scoring. The turning point occurred when Ethan Sorensen, with the bases loaded, drove the ball to deep left field where Huska hauled it down in front of the scoreboard. It scored a run as a sacrifice fly instead of a grand slam homer. At that point Beresford was done.

The defensive gem of the night was credited to catcher Meierkort. To start the seventh he pounced on a bunted ball that died in the grass 10 feet from the plate toward third base. A laser shot from Meierkort to first base nailed the runner. An inspired Morecraft struck out the next two batters, two more in the eighth and one in the ninth for a strong four-inning relief job, fanning six and giving up no hits.

Of Post 1's 11 hits, Meierkort, Mirtz, Bertram and Garrett had two each.

POST 1 - 6, HARTINGTON 3

When Post 1 finally got its first hit of the game in the fifth inning but still left the bases loaded, it appeared a fourth straight loss – only six outs away – was imminent.

But given a couple golden opportunities to start the top of the sixth, Post 1 made the most of them, and what transpired was a sudden and stunning six-run rally.

Pitcher Collin Bertram, who had sailed through three innings, saw five straight batters reach base in a three-run fourth. But when he escaped a two-on, one-out situation in the fifth with two inning-ending strikeouts and then his team got him the lead, he was unhittable over the final two innings.

Bertram accounted for 14 of the 21 Hartington outs with strikeouts. He walked only one (with two out in the seventh) and allowed five hits (three of them along with two hit batters in the fourth when Hartington scored three).

Vermillion had been dealt a blow in the top of the first inning when catcher Chayse Meierkort, trying to beat a double-play throw to first base, rolled his ankle and left the game. That left Post 1 with only nine players for the rest of the night.

Ironically Damarius Cheeseman, forced into action in Meierkort's slot in the batting order, ignited the rally when he laced a line shot at the Hartington third baseman who couldn't handle it. Up stepped Stormy Mirtz, and he grounded a ball to the same third baseman, and this time his throw to second for a force play went awry. Two batters, two errors, and Post 1 was in business!

Bertram helped his own cause with a booming double. After a walk to Jayce Huska, Tanner Settles stroked a sacrifice fly to bring Vermillion to within 3-2. A shortstop's error on Nate Garrett's grounder loaded the sacks again, and a force play on Joe Mazour's chopper tied the game.

Tanner Anderson singled to score Huska, and so did Caleb Miller, scoring Mazour for a 5-3 lead. Miller set in motion a double steal, and Anderson slid under a tag on the tail end of that play to make it 6-3. That was enough with which to work for Bertram. He got a grounder to Mirtz and two strikeouts for a 1-2-3 sixth. He fanned the first two batters in the seventh, and after a walk, a ground ball went to Anderson at third. His throw to first was true, and the victory was in hand.

MITCHELL 4-6, POST 1 - 1-5

Post 1 lost twice at Mitchell Friday night, scoring only an unearned run in a 4-1 loss in the

opener, then losing the nightcap in extra innings, 6-5.

Nate Garrett took the pitching loss in the first game, allowing just two earned runs in 4 1/3 innings. Joe Mazour threw the final 1 2/3, keeping Mitchell hitless and scoreless. Mitchell's Evan Mastel issued no walks in getting the win. Kirby Fuerst homered for Mitchell.

Post 1 garnered only three hits off Mastel, but two of them were back to back by Jayce Huska and Tanner Settles, and they led to Vermillion's lone run. Caleb Miller had the other hit.

Post 1 was down 5-0 entering its final at-bat in the nightcap but scored five times to tie the game. It started with a Stormy Mirtz single, a walk to Collin Bertram and Jayce Huska's single to load the bases. A walk to Settles scored the first run, Garrett's hit scored the next and Damarius Cheeseman's sacrifice fly accounted for the third. After a Tanner Anderson hit, Miller's single brought Post 1 within a run, and Chayse Meierkort's sacrifice fly tied it up. Two men were left stranded.

In the bottom of the eighth, however, with two out and a runner at first, a failed pickoff attempt sent the runner all the way to third. Mastel stroked a two-out walkoff single to score Mitchell's winning run.

Tanner Settles was the tough-luck losing pitcher after throwing three scoreless innings prior to the eighth. He had relieved starter Caleb Miller, who allowed Mitchell's five runs in the 3 1/3 innings he worked.

Miller and Meierkort had two hits each, and Garrett, Anderson, Huska and Mirtz had one hit each.

POST 320 - 8, POST 1 - 6

Vermillion outhit the Rapid City team 13-9, but Post 320 grouped six of its nine hits in a seven-run second inning off starter Chayse Meierkort. Nile Morecraft pitched two scoreless innings of relief, striking out three as did Meierkort.

Post 1, down 7-1 at one point, rallied with one run in the fifth and fourth in the sixth to close the final gap to 8-6. Stormy Mirtz had three hits and D'Andre Fore and Tanner Anderson two hits each. Mirtz drove home three runs, Anderson two and Nile Morecraft one.

Tanner Feterl of Post 320 had two doubles and three RBIs, all in the damaging second inning. Eric Koser, who gave up all 13 Post 1 hits, nevertheless lasted 5 2/3 innings and got the win. Trey Sauvage pitched the final 1 2/3 innings to get a save.

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