

Post 1 will open regional play next Thursday

By Parker Knox
Sportswriter

Vermillion Post 1, trying to return to the state American Legion Class "B" tournament for the first time since its championship season of 2009, will open regional play at 4 p.m. next Thursday, July 19, at Lennox.

The tournament begins Wednesday and concludes the following Sunday. It is the first time in the 12 years of Coach Jason Gault's coaching tenure with Post 1 that Vermillion has drawn a first-round bye. The regional champ advances to the state tourney in Milbank July 27-31.

Post 1 took a record of 17-13 into last night's (Thursday) game at Dakota Valley, the final contest of the regular season.

On Tuesday, Post 1 looked to be tournament-ready in a 15-2 and 7-0 sweep at Elk Point. Both games were five-inning contests although the first one ended early due to the 10-run rule.

Vermillion batted 15 men in the second inning of the opener, scoring 11 times on five hits, five walks, and five EP-J errors. Jayce Huska slugged two run-scoring doubles in that inning, Chayse Meierkort had an RBI single, and Stormy Mirtz lofted a sacrifice fly. Post 1 added four runs in the fourth as Collin Bertram, Meierkort and Tanner Anderson contributed RBI hits.

Nile Morecraft was the winning pitcher, allowing six hits, striking out four and walking none over the five innings.

A two-run homer by Anderson in the first inning got Post 1 going in the nightcap. Mirtz singled home two runs, and Tanner Settles and Morecraft also had RBIs in a four-run third. Bertram was the pitching winner, allowing three hits, walking none and striking out

eight in the five innings.

Caleb Miller played center field in the second game, the final position on the field he had never yet played under Coach Jason Gault's tenure as high school and Legion coach.

The game was unique in that there was no home-plate umpire. When one of the two-man team from the first game was called away, umpire Randy Bertram was left alone to work the nightcap. He did so from behind and on either side of the pitcher's mound, calling balls, strikes and everything else from there without any controversy or close calls whatsoever.

POST 1 - 12, LENNOX 7

In the last home game of the season Saturday, Post 1 led Lennox 6-1 after five innings and appeared to be breezing to victory. However, up to that point, it had been more Lennox mistakes than Vermillion achievements that had built the lead. Despite that lead, through five innings Post 1 had only four hits and had squandered countless opportunities. Up to that point they were 2-of-14 with runners in scoring position.

In the sixth (starter Nate Garrett's last inning) and the seventh (reliever Caleb Miller's first inning), Post 1 began giving runs back to Lennox, committing four infield errors that combined with four Lennox hits gave the visitors six runs in those two stanzas. Vermillion's lead was only 8-7.

But Vermillion pulled itself together, coming up with 10 hits over the next three innings to finally pull away. Meanwhile, second reliever Collin Bertram struck out two in the eighth, speared a line drive to end that inning and started a double play in the ninth as he held Lennox scoreless to get a save to go along with Garrett's win.

Seven players had two hits each for Post 1 - Bertram, Chayse Meierkort, Tanner Anderson, Stormy Mirtz, Jayce Huska, Tanner Settles and Garrett - and Miller had one hit. Meierkort and Huska had two RBIs each.

In one of the season's most unusual plays, Post 1 scored three runs on a bases-loaded walk in the second inning. Anderson drew that walk and forced in Bertram from third. But Ball 4 was a wild pitch, and Miller, who had been on second base, was on Bertram's heels as he crossed the plate. When the Lennox catcher tracked down the ball and threw to the pitcher covering at the plate in an attempt to get the third baserunner, Meierkort, the ball was dropped, allowing the third run to score on the play.

POST 1 - 12, DELL RAPIDS 2

Nile Morecraft needed only 69 pitches (53 of them strikes) over seven innings to stifle Dell Rapids, 12-2, Friday night. He gave up only four hits and one earned run, striking out four and walking none. Dells scored only in the fourth on a single, a triple and an infield error.

Meanwhile, Post 1 tallied three times in the first and never trailed. Anderson's hit scored one run, but the ball got past the right-fielder to let in a second run. Anderson himself later scored on the tail end of a double steal. Morecraft helped himself with an RBI single in the third right after Huska had scored from third on a similar double steal.

A seven-run fifth ignited by a Mirtz double included RBI hits by Garrett, Miller and Anderson and a sacrifice fly by Meierkort. Anderson drove in three runs and Morecraft two, and Settles and Mirtz had two hits each among Post 1's 10, all off starter Spencer Kerzman, who lasted five innings. The

game ended via the 10-run rule after seven.

RAPID CITY TOURNAMENT

Trying to salvage something out of their Rapid City tournament trip, Post 1 had a 5-2 lead through 5 1/2 innings of a consolation semifinal game July 3. Worse yet, they were two outs away from victory with a 5-3 lead, but even that wasn't enough.

Loveland, Colo., scored twice in the bottom of the seventh to tie the game, then won it in the eighth, 6-5, on a two-out single, a stolen base and an error at first base on an inning-ending ground ball.

After Loveland took a first-inning 2-0 lead, Post 1 responded with two runs in the second and two more in the third. An infield grounder from Jayce Huska and Nate Garrett's RBI single produced the first two tallies. A bases-loaded walk to Stormy Mirtz and a wild pitch let in the next two scores. Damarius Cheeseman's hit in the fifth made it 5-2.

Starter Chayse Meierkort had Loveland well in hand through three innings, but from the fourth inning on, he and Post 1 lived dangerously. Loveland stranded two runners in the fourth and two more in the fifth. Then in the sixth a single, a wild pitch and two passed balls gave Loveland a gift run to make it 5-3, and they left the bases loaded.

In the bottom of the seventh with Vermillion two outs from the win, Loveland got three hits, an outfield error and a wild pitch to tie the game and left the sacks jammed again.

Meanwhile, Loveland reliever Aaron Morrison was in the process of retiring 10 of the last 11 Vermillion batters of the game. Morrison got the win in relief. Vermillion reliever Joe Mazour, who pitched that eighth inning, was

tagged with the hard-luck pitching loss.

In its first game in Rapid City, Post 1 was one out away from a thrilling come-from-behind win but coughed up a pair of runs in the bottom of the seventh, losing to Sheridan, WY, 6-5. An RBI hit by Tanner Anderson and Chayse Meierkort's steal of home rallied Post 1 into a 4-4 tie in the fifth. In the seventh Bertram's one-out double and Meierkort's single gave Vermillion a 5-4 lead.

An infield error and a hit batter put Sheridan's tying and winning runs on base. A double tied the game, and a wild pitch let in the winning run.

Rapid City Post 320 scored three in the sixth on two hits and three Post 1 errors to break a 3-3 tie, then retired Post 1 in the seventh to win, 6-3. A dropped fly in center field and an infield error started Post 320's winning rally. A base hit on a suicide squeeze bunt let in the lead run, and another error allowed an insurance run to score.

Bertram went 5 1/3 innings, giving up three earned runs, fanning five and walking two while allowing seven hits.

A seven-run, eight-hit fifth that included three more Vermillion errors gave Canon City, Colo., a big lead in their 9-1 win over Post 1. The game ended after five innings. Vermillion's only run came on a walk, a sacrifice and two wild pitches. Starter Tanner Settles kept Canon City contained until the disastrous fifth.

Just prior to the Rapid City trip, Vermillion lost to Yankton 14-8, committing nine errors, walking six batters, hitting six others and balking twice. Yankton's defense committed seven errors, keeping Post 1 within striking distance most of the way.

Teeners finishing up last week of regular season before break, regions

By Parker Knox
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While other youth baseball teams are set to begin tournament play, Vermillion's VFW 15-16 Teeners still have a week of regular-season play to go, then a week off before Region 1A begins July 30 in Canton.

Vermillion's first game in tourney play will be against Irene at 8 p.m. July 30. The eight-team double-elimination affair will run through Aug. 3 and possibly Aug. 4 to determine a state tourney entrant.

Meanwhile, Vermillion's 13-

14 Teener Reds will open their Region 1A tourney against Lennox at 10 a.m. Saturday at Elk Point. Their seven-team regional runs through next Thursday.

If the older Teeners are going to advance very far in tournament play, they will have to display a bit more offense than they showed Monday in South Sioux City. A first-inning single by Colin Olson that scored Jay Munger, who had walked, was the grand total of Vermillion's offense. They would have neither a run nor a hit the rest of the evening in losing a pair to South Sioux, 5-1 in five innings and 10-0 in four

innings.

Olson pitched the first game, allowing only four hits in four innings while walking three, hitting two and striking out two. Infield errors were involved in three of South Sioux's runs.

In the second game pitcher Shawn Harral faced only 13 Vermillion batters. Ten of them struck out, one was out on an outfield fly, another grounded out, and one walked.

The team did not commit any errors, but starter Ryan Schuster gave up 10 hits, walked two, struck out two and hit four batters. South Sioux scored two in the first, three in the second, one in the third and fourth in

the fourth. Schuster was relieved three batters into the bottom of the fourth. Reliever Seth Heine committed two balks, each allowing in a run that lifted South Sioux to the 10-0 margin that ended the game.

On Saturday Vermillion improved to 21-11 with a 15-1 demolition of Lennox in five innings. Jacob Odens allowed only two hits in three innings of pitching, and Ethan James threw two hitless innings in relief.

A nine-run second inning that included only two hits but three Lennox errors, a hit batter and six walks blew the game

open. Vermillion had only seven hits (two by Jay Munger) but took advantage of every Lennox mistake. Munger drove in three runs and Seth Heine and Colin Olson two each.

In earlier games:

* Vermillion split a twinbill at Irene, winning 6-1 behind James' four-hit, four-strikeout complete game and losing 20-8. Heine had a double, triple and three RBIs and Peter Haught two hits and two runs in the win. Heine had three more hits and three RBIs in the loss.

* The Teeners shut out Scotland, 9-0, as Odens won a complete-game effort, fanning seven. Ty Iverson had two hits

and four RBIs, Heine two hits, Jack Brown an RBI double and Kyle Larson and RBI single.

* Colin Olson struck out five in a complete-game 7-4 win over Harrisburg. Haught's two-run triple broke a tie in the fourth inning. Olson and Munger had two hits each.

* Vermillion won at Parker, 18-5, scoring 10 runs in a furious first inning. Heine slugged a two-run homer and had two doubles, scoring three times. James had two doubles and three RBIs, Munger two hits, two RBIs and four runs and Odens an RBI double.

USD women's tennis named ITA All-Academic

The University of South Dakota women's tennis team has been named a 2012 Intercollegiate Tennis Association All-Academic team, it was announced on Tuesday. In addition, five Coyotes were named ITA Scholar-Athletes.

The All-Academic team honor is the seventh time in eight years the Coyotes have earned the award. The ITA All-Academic Team award is open to any ITA program that has a cumulative team grade point average of 3.20 or above (on a 4.00 scale). All eligible student-athletes whose names appear on the NCAA eligibility form and have competed in one or more varsity matches must average into the GPA for the current academic year (including fall 2011 and spring 2012). South Dakota finished with a GPA of 3.48 for the 2011-12 academic year.

"I am very proud of the ladies' ability to balance their academics and athletics," USD head coach Malcolm Gilreath said. "Their hard work and dedication both in the classroom and on the court is very admirable and it is great they are getting the recognition they have earned."

Five Coyote athletes earned ITA Scholar-Athlete awards. To receive that honor, athletes must be a letterwinner, have a GPA of at least 3.50 for the academic year and have been enrolled at their current school for at least two semesters.

South Dakota senior Kaitlyn Deragisch (Luverne, MN), junior Veronika Makashov (Richmond Hill, Ontario), sophomores Maddy Warder (Sioux City, IA), Michelle Elkin (Omaha, NE) and freshman Yamini Reddy (Bangalore, India) all were named ITA Scholar Athletes. The five honorees bring the total to 29 who have received Scholar-Athlete honors in Gilreath's tenure.



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