

Rams snap 16-game slide against Coe

Written by Jim Ecker

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Seth Wing grew up in Maquoketa, so he jumped at the opportunity to come "home" and become the new baseball coach at Cornell College three years ago even though the Rams had nearly hit rock-bottom as a program.

Wing obviously knew what he was doing.

Cornell took another big step in the right direction Tuesday with a 10-8 victory over Coe at Veterans Memorial Stadium, snapping a 16-game losing streak against the Kohawks.

"It's a big win for our program," said Wing. "It kind of shows that we are turning the corner and can finally compete with them. It's been a long time."

The Rams had not beaten the Kohawks since 2008.

"We didn't play great and they didn't play great, but we did a great job of being resilient and not letting our mistakes get the best of us," said

Wing. "I knew this was a group that could take that step and finally get the win."

Cornell won only three games in 2011 and went looking for a new head coach. Wing helped Winona State reach the championship game of the NCAA Division II national tournament that year as their associate head coach and heeded the call to Mount Vernon.

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"It was a chance to come back home," he said. "It's what I wanted to do. And it's been an unbelievable move for us. We're really excited."

Wing's parents and other family members still live in Maquoketa.

Cornell went 8-32 in Wing's first year as head coach in 2012, a jump of five victories from the previous campaign. The Rams finished 12-22 last season and are now 17-9 overall and 5-3 in the Midwest Conference, tied for first place in the South Division.

Wing said he inherited some good players and has added others along the way.

"They wanted to win. They just didn't have the culture to provide it," he said. "I knew what it would take. I tried to gain their trust and get them to believe in what we were doing."

"Every day, we're gaining more and more trust in each other and it's really paying off."

Coe grabbed an 8-7 lead in the top of the eighth inning on a three-run double by Alec Zwanziger, but Cornell came right back with three runs of its own in the bottom of the eighth for a 10-8 lead that held up.

Max Freilinger and John Tesensky collected RBIs for the Rams in the eighth inning.

Beriah Quick moved from shortstop to the mound in the top of the ninth and retired three straight Kohawks for the save, getting the last two outs on strikeouts.

It was another tough loss for Coe, which fell to 11-20 for the campaign. The Kohawks have lost eight one-run games and have dropped five two-run contests.

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Coe's overall statistics for the season are nearly dead-even with their opponents, which would suggest they should be flirting with a .500 record, but Coach Steve Cook said the Kohawks have not been doing the little things to win games.

"I think it has shown up, especially in tight ballgames," he said. "To be sitting eight or nine games under .500, it's a little bit of a mystery. But this game, it has a way to find you."

Cook indicated all those close losses have taken a toll on his ballclub.

"They're human. They're 18 to 22 years old," he said. "They're battling it, too."