

J-Hawks make Bulldogs say 'Unkel'

Written by Mike Koolbeck

Thursday, 26 May 2011 22:31 - Last Updated Thursday, 26 May 2011 22:35



One hit was enough to make Bettendorf say "Unkel" Thursday night at the Jefferson baseball field.

Tanner Unkel's two-run single in the bottom of the fifth inning broke a scoreless tie and propelled Jefferson to a 3-0 win over Bettendorf.

Unkel's hit was the lone safety for the J-Hawks (1-1). It came after a hit batsman, base on balls and wild pitch had put J-Hawks at second and third with one out.

Unkel, the J-Hawks' speedy lead-off hitter, slapped a 1-1 fastball the opposite way past Bettendorf first baseman JP Flynn and into right field, chasing home both runners.

"He's a good opposite-field hitter and he was due," Jefferson Coach Mike Kuba said. "That was the right spot for him."

Kuba said Unkel has the green light to drop down a bunt whenever he wants. With the runners at first and second, Bettendorf put on several plays anticipating a bunt. The wild pitch moved the runners up and made it more prudent for Unkel to hit away.

"Once I saw that third baseman creeping in, I thought I might as well try to put one through the right side and see what happens," Unkel said. "I just tried to put the ball in play."

Bettendorf right-hander Alec Darrow (0-1) helped out with a pitch on the outside portion of the plate.

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"I just stepped to it and rammed it down the right side," Unkel said.

Unkel then stole second and, after a walk to Drew Striegel, swiped third. He scored when the throw to third by Bettendorf catcher Ryan Schmitt skipped into left field.



Bettendorf (0-1) had four hits but got only one runner as far as third base, and that came with two outs in the sixth inning. Michael Rooney, who worked the final four innings, struck out Alec Darrow looking to end the inning.

"Our pitching staff did a nice job of keeping us close," Kuba said. "That was a key right there."

Alex Larson and Rooney, both seniors, limited Bettendorf to four hits. Larson gave up two hits over the first three innings and struck out three. Rooney, a slender southpaw with a tailing fastball and nasty overhand curve, fanned eight. With Bulldogs on first and second, he whiffed Flynn, the Bettendorf clean-up batter, to end the game.

"We did a nice job of getting on top (ahead in the count) and keeping those hitters guessing. Whenever you do that it helps your defense," Kuba said. "We need to give Michael the ball. He has a nice presence and command about himself and you could see the senior leadership come through, and the other guys pick up on that."

While Kuba was pleased with the win, he told his team afterward that they are going to have to

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pick it up on offense and soon. The J-Hawks host Prairie in a Mississippi Valley Conference doubleheader Tuesday at 5 p.m.

"I told the kids, 'That scoreboard will not win a game Tuesday night,' " Kuba said. "I shouldn't say will not not, but odds are it won't. We have some adjustments to make."

Unkel agreed.

"We definitely need to get our bats going," he said. "But we're only a couple of games into the season, so we'll get a lot better. We have a lot of guys with a lot of potential."

Jefferson junior first baseman Jordan Dee got hit by a pitch on his left hand in the second inning. Kuba said the hand could possibly be broken.

BETTENDORF (0)

Cam Schmid, lf, 3 0 0 0, Gordon Wright, ss, 4 0 1 0, Nick Downey, cf-p, 3 0 0 0, JP Flynn, 1b, 4 0 0 0, Ryan Schmitt, c, 2 0 1 0, Cole Clearman, cr, 0 0 0 0, Andy Miles, 2b, 3 0 0 0, Dan Sullivan, 3b, 3 0 2 0, Alec Darrow, p-rf, 3 0 0 0, Zach Edwards, rf, 3 0 0 0, Justin Hill, p-cf, 0 0 0 0, Matt Albert, ph, 0 0 0 0. Totals 27 0 4 0.

JEFFERSON (3)

Tanner Unkel, 2b, 3 1 1 2, Drew Striegel, c, 1 0 0 0, Austin Goodell, cr, 0 0 0 0, Michael Rooney, cf-p, 3 0 0 0, Bailey Hollingsworth, rf, 3 0 0 0, Alex Larson, p, 1 0 0 0, Christian Knox, cf, 0 0 0 0, Chance Tiedtke, ss, 3 0 0 0, Jordan Dee, 1b, 0 0 0 0, Jordan McCormick, 1b, 0 1 0 0, Drake Vanous, lf, 3 0 0 0, Sam Techau, 3b, 2 1 0 0. Totals 19 3 1 2.

Bettendorf 000 000 0 -- 0 4 1

Jefferson 000 030 x -- 3 1 2

Darrow, Hill (5), Downey (6) and Schmitt. Larson, Rooney (4) and Striegel. W-Rooney (1-0).

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L-Darrow (0-1)

2B-Schmitt, Sullivan 2. SB-Unkel 2, Dee.