

Olson helps J-Hawks split with Saints

Written by Mike Condon
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Alyssa Olson doesn't pitch the first game of doubleheaders for Cedar Rapids Jefferson, but that doesn't mean the sophomore isn't learning while watching from the dugout.

Olson went to school during the opener of Thursday night's Mississippi Valley Conference twinbill against Cedar Rapids Xavier.

The Saints dominated Game 1, rapping out 14 hits against two other J-Hawk pitchers en route to an impressive 11-4 victory at Jefferson.

It was a different story in the nightcap.

Olson struck out the first nine Saints hitters she saw and retired the first 15 in a row, leading the J-Hawks to a 5-0 win and a split in the battle of state-ranked teams.

Olson finished with a two-hitter.

"I just felt like I had to come out and show our team that we are a good team," she said. "I feel like I had to get everybody back up and give us back the momentum."

Jefferson Coach Brian Erbe said Olson has been solid in every outing. He credits much of that to the learning his young right-hander does in the dugout.

"She does a good job of studying the batters while she keeps the book in the dugout," Erbe said. "She does a good job of getting herself ready for the second game. She gets herself

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well-prepared by being focused during the first game.”

Xavier Coach Nikki Price was equally impressed with Olson, now 6-0.

“She was on,” Price said. “Her ball moves very well. She’ll be a good one for them for the next few years.”

The J-Hawks (10-2, 6-2 MVC, ranked No.8 in Class 5A) got all the offense they would need in the nightcap when Maddie Hansen lifted a two-out, two-run homer in the bottom of the first inning.

“I think that took a lot of pressure off,” Olson said. “After the first game, we needed to get off to a good start and Maddie’s homer did that.”

As much as Xavier’s offense struggled in Game 2, it was clicking in the opener. Erin Drahozal pounded a two-run homer in the first inning and drove home two more with a two-run single in a six-run second.

Drahozal and Jamie Feltes had three hits each for Xavier (4-4, 4-4 MVC, ranked No.8 in Class 4A).

Morgan Breitbach added a pair of hits, driving home three runs for Xavier. Three other Saints – Sydney Galligan, Erica Miller and Courtney Colston – had two hits apiece.

Price was pleased with the approach her players took at the plate.

“It was good to see them attacking the ball,” she said. “We were patient at the plate, waiting for a pitch to drive.”

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Jacey Wiebold and Claire Christensen combined to get the win in the circle for Xavier in the opener.

"We're dealing with some injuries. It's all about giving kids opportunities and allowing them to step up," said Price. "Jacey threw a good first two innings and Claire came in and finished up well."

The split was a good result in Price's eyes.

"We knew it was going to be two very good games," she said. "It's definitely better to go home with a split than two losses."

It was an emotional night for Erbe. He spent the past 10 seasons coaching at Xavier before replacing legendary Jefferson coach Larry Niemeyer this year.

"I had 10 great years at Xavier. I know all these kids and had great relationships with all of them," Erbe said.

"Certainly it was emotional, but I tried to impress on our kids that these were just two more conference games that we had to play to reach our goal of winning a conference championship."

Price was Erbe's top assistant at Xavier before succeeding him as head coach this season.

GAME 1

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XAVIER (11): A.Schwach, 2b, 4 1 1 0, Galligan, lf, 4 1 2 1, Schulte, 1b, 2 3 0 1, Drahozal, dp, 4 2 3 4, Feltes, 3b, 4 1 3 2, Breitbach, rf, 3 1 2 3, Miller, c, 3 0 2 1, J.Schwach, cr, 0 1 0 0, Deutmeyer, ss, 4 0 0 0, Colston, 2b, 4 1 2 0, Wiebold, p, 0 0 0 0, Christensen, p, 0 0 0 0. Totals 32 11 14 11.

JEFFERSON (4): Stromert, cf, 4 0 1 0, Davidson, 2b, 4 0 1 0, Grimm, lf, 3 1 1 0, Hansen, c, 3 1 2 1, Fowler, cr, 0 0 0 0, Koolbeck, 1b, 4 0 1 1, Kuba, 3b, 3 0 1 0, Towns, rf, 3 2 2 0, Holub, ss, 3 0 1 1, Stauffer, p, 2 0 1 0, Guy, cr, 0 0 0 0, Good, p, 1 0 0 0. Totals 30 4 11 4.

Xavier 260 201 0 – 11 14 1

Jefferson 011 100 1 – 4 11 1

Wiebold, Christensen (2) and Miller. Stauffer, Good (4) and Hansen. W – Christensen. L – Stauffer. 2B – Breitbach 2, Feltes, Miller, Davidson, Grimm, Towns. HR – Drahozal. SB – Hansen.

GAME 2

XAVIER (0): A.Schwach, 2b, 3 0 0 0, Galligan, lf, 3 0 1 0, Schulte, 1b, 3 0 0 0, Drahozal, p, 3 0 0 1, Feltes, 3b, 3 0 0 0, Breitbach, rf, 2 0 0 0, Miller, c, 1 0 0 0, J.Schwach, cr, 0 0 0 0, Deutmeyer, ss, 1 0 0 0, Colston, 2b, 1 0 0 0. Totals 20 0 2 0.

JEFFERSON (5): Stromert, cf, 4 0 0 0, Davidson, 2b, 3 1 1 0, Grimm, lf, 4 1 1 0, Hansen, c, 2 1 2 2, Fowler, cr, 0 1 0 0, Koolbeck, 1b, 2 0 1 1, Guy, pr, 0 0 0 0, Kuba, 3b, 3 0 1 0, Towns, rf, 1 0 1 0, Timmerman, ss, 3 1 0 0, Blietz, dp, 2 0 0 0, Olson, p, 0 0 0 0. Totals 24 5 7 3.

Xavier 000 000 0 – 0 2 2

Jefferson 200 012 x – 5 7 1

Drahozal and Miller. Olson and Hansen. W – Olson. L – Drahozal. 2B – Hansen. HR – Hansen.

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