

J-Hawks' sweep delivers Valley crown

Written by Jake Koolbeck

Friday, 08 July 2011 00:21 - Last Updated Friday, 08 July 2011 00:50

WATERLOO - The Jefferson J-Hawks softball team needed a sweep Thursday night at Waterloo East to hold off Dubuque Hempstead for the Valley Division title.

They got it.

After a thrilling 2-1, 10-inning win in the opener, the No. 7 J-Hawks (31-7, 22-3) sewed up the Valley title with a 6-1 win in the nightcap behind a strong performance from senior Katie Naber.

"It feels great to win our conference, but I was pitching well and enjoying it since it is possibly the last game I may play in," said Naber, who likely will not pitch in the regional tournament series. "My main goal was to finish strong."

Naber finished strong in game two, but the real excitement came in the J-Hawks' victory in the opener. The game was a preview of what could be a regional semifinal matchup on Monday at Jefferson. Waterloo East (18-20, 13-12) hosts Cedar Rapids Washington (5-31, 3-23) in a first-round game Saturday. The winner of that game plays at Jefferson on Monday.

"They are a good team and we will just have to play J-Hawk softball on Monday," Jefferson junior pitcher Hannah Petersen said.

Petersen went 10 strong innings for the J-Hawks in the opener, giving up just one run on six hits for the win. Trojans ace junior Alyson Netty went the complete 10 innings, giving up two unearned runs on six hits.

"It was not that tough (to go 10 innings) because early in the season I was pitching two games," Petersen said. Naber was suspended for the first third of the season and Petersen pitched both ends of doubleheaders during her absence.

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Jefferson had chances early in the opener but failed to capitalize in both the first and second innings.

In the first inning junior Kailey Drake singled with one out and then stole both second and third to put a runner 60 feet away with one out. Jefferson Coach Larry Niemeyer tried to push Drake across with a sacrifice bunt, but she was thrown out at the plate by Trojans junior first baseman Kelsey Rash. The J-Hawks also left two on in the second inning.

"We had chances early that we didn't capitalize on," said Niemeyer, who admitted he was concerned about the J-Hawks' inability to execute. "I have coached long enough to know that sometimes if you don't score when you have the chance you aren't going to."

Fortunately for the J-Hawks, Petersen and the defense kept the Trojans off the scoreboard long enough to take advantage of some late opportunities.

The Trojans didn't threaten until the sixth inning. Katelyn Kinnetz doubled to lead off the inning and Netty followed with a single that may have scored Kinnetz if not for a key defensive play by the J-Hawks' defense.

After Kinnetz's double, she attempted a steal of third base on a fake bunt and steal play. Jefferson junior shortstop Carson Burgart had to beat Kinnetz to third base to take the throw from senior catcher Nicole Marquart and make the tag. The throw was good and Burgart managed to slap the tag on Kinnetz for a big out. The J-Hawks did lose Burgart for the rest of the night to a minor injury in the collision at third.

"The throw was low but on target," Burgart said. "We collided but I still got the out."

The game was scoreless through eight innings. Jefferson tallied in the ninth when junior Hannah McInerney reached on an error and Naber pinch ran for her. Naber scored on a sacrifice fly by sophomore Kaitlyn Davidson.

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"I just wanted to make contact and hit it to the right side because that is the best way for the runner to score," Davidson said.

But the Trojans answered back in the bottom half of the ninth with a run of their own. Netty drew a walk and was singled in by freshman Ashley Kubik.

The game went to the 10th and again Jefferson scored. Drake singled and came around to score on an error, the J-Hawks' second unearned run in as many innings.

"A game that goes that long is usually decided by errors," Niemeyer said.

The nightcap went a little easier for the J-Hawks, who scored three times in the first inning. After a pair of walks and an error that scored a run, eighth grader Maddie Hanson and McInerney each singled home a run.

"It always changes the complexion (of a game) if you can score early," Niemeyer said.

The J-Hawks tacked on two more in the third on hits from junior Kenna Fry and Hanson, coupled with a passed ball and a RBI groundout from McInerney. Fry hit a solo shot in the fifth to add another for the J-Hawks.

"I knew I needed to help my team out anyway I could and putting the ball in play and I did that," said Fry, who was 3-for-4 in game two. "The second pitcher didn't hit her spots as well as the first and I could see the ball better."

Waterloo East got its only run in the fourth when Kubik singled home Netty, who had singled to lead off the frame.

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The early runs were plenty for Naber and a stingy Jefferson defense to take the nightcap and lock up the Valley Division title.

"Katie pitched real well, it is good to see her do that," Niemeyer said.

GAME 1

JEFFERSON (2)

Rachel Sedlacek, LF, 5 0 0 0, Kailey Drake, CF, 5 1 2 0, Hannah Petersen, P, 3 0 0 0, Ashley Madsen, CF, 0 0 0 0, Katelyn Holub, cr, 0 0 0 0, Kenna Fry, 1B, 4 0 0 0, Maddie Hanson, DP, 5 0 1 0, Hannah Towns, pr, 0 0 0 0, Carson Burgart, SS, 2 0 1 0, Amber Grimm, ph, 1 0 0 0, Hannah McInerney, 3B, 1 0 0 0, Katie Naber, pr, 0 1 0 0, Maddie Koolbeck, RF, 2 0 0 0, Kaitlyn Davidson, 2B, 3 0 2 1, Maddy Blietz, 3B, 3 0 0 0, Nicole Marquart, C, 0 0 0 0. Totals 34 2 6 1.

WATERLOO EAST (1)

Katie Henry, CF, 5 0 1 0, Katelyn Kinnetz, SS, 3 0 1 0, Alyson Netty, P, 3 1 1 0, Kelsey Rash, 1B, 2 0 0 0, Maggie Nichols, LF, 4 0 0 0, Ashley Kubik, C, 4 0 1 1, Alison Nichols, cr, 0 0 0 0, Meghan Thompson, DP, 4 0 0 0, Kenzi Wroe, 3B, 3 0 1 0, Deanna Schmidt, 2B, 3 0 1 0, Meghan Frank, RF, 0 0 0 0. Totals 31 1 6 1.

Jefferson 000 000 001 1 - 2 6 0

Waterloo East 000 000 001 0 - 1 6 3

Petersen and Marquart. Netty and Kubik. W – Petersen. L – Netty. 2B – Kinnetz, Wroe, Schmidt. SB – Drake 3, Madsen.

GAME 2

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JEFFERSON (6)

Rachel Sedlacek, LF, 3 1 2 0, Kailey Drake, CF, 4 0 0 0, Amber Grimm, RF, 3 1 0 0, Kenna Fry, 1B, 4 3 3 1, Dani Stromert, 1B, 0 0 0 0, Maddie Hanson, DP, 4 1 3 1, Hannah McInerney, 3B, 3 0 1 2, Kaitlyn Davidson, 2B, 4 0 1 0, Maddy Blietz, SS, 4 0 1 0, Nicole Marquart, C, 3 0 1 0, Ashley Madsen, cr, 0 0 0 0, Katie Naber, P, 0 0 0 0. Totals 32 6 12 4.

WATERLOO EAST (1)

Katie Henry, CF, 3 0 0 0, Katelyn Kinnetz, SS, 3 0 1 0, Alyson Netty, 1B, 3 1 1 0, Kelsey Rash, P, 3 0 1 0, Maggie Nichols, LF, 3 0 1 0, Ashley Kubik, C, 3 0 1 1, Alison Nichols, cr, 0 0 0 0, Kenzi Wroe, 3B, 3 0 1 0, Deanna Schmidt, 2B, 3 0 0 0, Kelsey Kreiner, 1 0 0 0. Totals 25 1 6 1.

Jefferson 302 010 0 - 6 12 1

Waterloo East 000 100 0 - 1 6 1

Naber and Marquart. Rash and Kubik. W – Naber. L – Rash. 2B – Hanson, Marquart. HR – Fry. SB – Sedlacek 2.