

Leipsic Comes Up Short in State Title Game Against St. John's

Putnam County Sentinel – By Brandon Unverferth - June 17, 2026

AKRON – History belonged to St. John's on Saturday evening.

Behind a six-run second inning and another dominant pitching performance, the Blue Jays, 21-7, captured the first baseball state championship in program history with a 10-0 victory over Leipsic, 18-10, in the Division VII title game at Credit Union Park.

The championship capped off a remarkable season for St. John's, whose only previous state tournament appearance came in 2011 when the Blue Jays reached the semi-finals. Leipsic made its first championship game appearance since winning the Division A title in 1976.

St. John's wasted little time taking control. Andrew Elwer delivered a sacrifice fly in the opening inning to plate the game's first run before the Blue Jays broke things open in the second.

Aidan Swick drove in a run with a single, Braden Lindeman followed with a two-run hit, Tye McClain added an RBI single and Cameron Elwer capped the outburst with a two-run double as St. John's built a commanding 7-0 lead.

The offensive explosion was more than enough support for Andrew Elwer, who turned in another brilliant outing on the mound.

The junior scattered five hits over six scoreless innings while striking out eight and walking one.

"Touching home plate at the end of this game was an unreal feeling," Andrew Elwer said. "This state run is something we've worked so hard for. I have to thank these guys for helping

me get to this point. Getting ahead in counts early was key to putting runners away and I'm just so happy we accomplished our ultimate goal of becoming the first St. John's baseball state champions."

St. John's collected 11 hits in the victory. Drake Fittro, Braden Lindeman and Andrew Elwer each finished with two hits, while Cameron Elwer, Tyce McCain, Logan Duncan, Maddox Kroeger and Aidan Swick added one hit apiece.

Throughout the postseason, different players stepped into the spotlight and head coach Jerry Jackson said Saturday's championship effort was another example of the team's depth.

"Throughout this whole tournament run, different parts of the lineup have stepped up," Jackson said. "Today we needed a complete effort and solid pitching and we got both. Andrew pitched a phenomenal game and our hitters followed suit with some huge at bats."

Jackson reflected on the heartbreaks his program had experienced in recent years, including losses to Minster in previous tournament runs.

"We've been in so many close games throughout the tournament over the years," Jackson added. "Falling 2-0 to Minster a few years ago and the 1-0 last year, we knew we had a group capable of getting over the hump. I kept telling the guys to take it one game and one pitch at a time and we get where we wanted to be."

The championship was the second state title of the school year for many of the players who also helped guide the Blue Jays to an undefeated

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basketball season and a Division VII crown in March.

"These guys are just winners," Jackson stated. "I asked Cameron before the game if he'd be willing to pitch if we needed him and he immediately said, 'Absolutely, I've got your back, coach.' That's the kind of kids we have."

"We had nine guys from that basketball team," Jackson continued. "I told them I thought we could do the same in baseball. They went to work every day and earned this. Being able to say we're state champions is a special feeling. I couldn't be prouder."

Senior Maddox Kroeger said winning a second state title with many of the same teammates made the accomplishment even more memorable.

"This group has a lot of the same guys from basketball and to repeat as state champions in another sport is really special," Kroeger said. "The fans that came out and supported us all year have been amazing. I'm just so proud of this group."

For senior Hank Walpole, the title represents years of memories to share with lifelong friends.

"There's nothing better than spending time with this group," Walpole said. "These are friends I've grown up with since first grade when I moved here. There's nobody else I'd rather experience this with. I wouldn't want to end my career any other way. It's amazing to leave a piece of history behind as the first state baseball champions."

Despite the loss, Leipsic head coach Darren Henry praised his team for a memorable season

that returned the Vikings to the state tournament for the first time in 50 years.

"I'm super proud of these guys," Henry said. "This group really brought our community together all season. We may not have been the prettiest team to watch, but the way these kids battled and fought all year says a lot about them."

Henry credit Andrew Elwer and the Blue Jays for keeping Leipsic from finding offensive momentum.

"We just couldn't get into a rhythm," Henry added. "We'd get a hit with runners on base, but we couldn't string them together. Andrew pitched a really solid game and came up big when they needed outs."

Though the season ended one win short of a championship, Henry knows the Vikings secured their place in program history.

"This team is in the history books at Leipsic," Henry concluded. "To be here for the first time in 50 years and beat some really good teams along the way, I couldn't be prouder of what these guys accomplished."

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