

Van Wert Takes Controversial 17-4 Win Over O-G, Titans to Protest

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It was a nasty way to open the Western Buckeye League season. Ottawa-Glandorf dropped a controversial 17-4 contest to Van Wert Tuesday night but it wasn't the eight Titan errors or a ten-run burst in the bottom of the sixth that has O-G coach Dale Bruskotter protesting the game. What he's protesting is a game that was run anyway but by the book.

Trailing 4-7 in the top of the sixth, O-G was threatening. A double steal would have closed the gap to a 5-7 ball game with the tying run at the plate but Jeff Quinn was called out a second on the play. "There were two registered umpires there at the start of the game," Bruskotter picks up the story, "but the one that was calling plays at second had left the field earlier and they brought someone out of the stands to do the umpiring. We asked where the other ump was but all they said was that he had other things he had to do. We checked the rule book and he can't leave the field unless ill or injured. The kid that called the play at second in the sixth also made a call in their half of the sixth that kept their rally going."

The play referred to occurred with Van Wert threatening to blow the game open in the bottom half of the sixth. A Van Wert runner was caught in a run-down between first and second and was apparently tagged out by O-G first baseman, Dave Selhorst. The runner was called safe when he returned to first, however, and the last straw broke the back of the Titans. Six hits and four errors the rest of the inning completed the damage.

"I can admit that we didn't play good ball in the first three innings," Bruskotter stated, "but in the fourth, fifth, and sixth we played outstanding baseball." In those three innings, the Titans out hit the Cougars, 6-3, outscored them 4-0 and committed no errors.

Four errors by O-G spotted the Cougars to a 5-0 lead after the first two innings and a pair of singles made it 7-0 after three. The Titans started clawing back, however, getting two runs in the fourth and one each in the fifth and sixth to pull back in contention. Dan Selhorst walked and scored when Jeff Kuhlman's double was errored to start the scoring and Kuhlman raced home on Mark Robert's single. Tom Croy tripled and scored on an RBI single by Brad Schroeder in the fifth and Jeff Kuhlman's single, a walk and a balk, and Jeff Quinn's base hit netted a run in the sixth. Then came the controversial call at second, Van Wert's gift in the sixth inning and the beginning of the end of O-G.

Rick Pothast took the loss for O-G, his second of the season, but the 6'1" Titan senior struck out nine and walked just three in a sparkling individual performance. Pothast also reached base twice on a pair of walks while Croy smacked a triple, Tom Weber laced a double and Jeff Kuhlman added a double and a single in three trips to the plate.