

State Tournament Ends Abruptly for Wildcats

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Kalida's magical run to the baseball final four in Division IV ended on a sour note Thursday afternoon at the Lucas County Rec. Centering in Maumee.

Mental mistakes in the field and on the base paths hurt the Wildcats Thursday afternoon as Greenwich South Central handed the state's 13th ranked team a 5-2 loss. The semi-final loss ended Kalida's season with a fine 15-5 record.

"It was the mental things, mentally we were not sharp," said Kalida Coach Jim McBride. "Errors are a part of the game, but at this level you can't make the mental mistakes we did."

"Still I'm proud of these kids. The mentality of the group is not to give up and we didn't. When you stop to consider we are among the four best teams in Ohio, that's an impressive accomplishment."

The first inning proved to be especially costly to the Wildcats as South Central (20-7) scored three times on just one hit and never trailed again.

With one out in the first inning the Trojans Tod Fox reached on an error. Doug Dendinger followed with a walk and Chad Hunt walked with two outs to load the bases.

Josh Stryker then scored two runs with a single and Hunt scored as Kalida pitcher Chad Ehrnsberger was called for a balk.

After the first inning Ehrnsberger worked out of trouble in the third inning as South Central had two runners on base, but wasn't as fortunate in the fifth inning.

To start the Trojan fifth Dendinger was hit by a pitch and stole second base. Josh Rodriquez then followed with an RBI single and stole second base. After Hunt singled putting runners at the corners, Stryker lifted a sacrifice fly to centerfield scoring Rodriquez.

On the day Ehrnsberger (8-2) allowed five runs, one earned, on four hits with eight strikeouts and four walks.

"That was not vintage Chad Ehrnsberger today," McBride said. "He was just missing today and he was frustrated with himself. But sometimes, even in the majors, you don't always have your best stuff and that wasn't his best stuff today. Still he has nothing to be ashamed of."

While Ehrnsberger struggled early, Trojan starting pitcher Tod Fox was just the opposite.

Fox (11-1) allowed only two base runners through three innings and on the day allowed two runs on six hits with five strikeouts and three walks. The six hits were the most off of Fox in a game this season.

"Fox threw a great game," McBride said. "He mixed his speeds well. Still we were able to get the most hits off him he has given up this season."

Two of the Wildcats six hits came in the fourth inning as Kalida scored their only runs of the game.

Ehrnsberger started the inning by working his second walk of the game and stole second base. After an out Jamie Zeller doubled scoring Ehrnsberger from second base.

After Neil Rampe hit a bullet right at the shortstop for the second out, designated hitter Joel Burgei lined a pitch into centerfield allowing Zeller to score. Craig Czubik then followed with a single and when Brian Rellinger's infield grounder was misplayed the bases were loaded. However, Burgei rounded third base too far on the play and was tagged out as he scrambled back to the bag.

Kalida also mounted a threat in their final at-bat as the first two batters reach base.

Czubik led off the inning with a single and went to second on a wild pitch. Rellinger then followed with an infield single as he slid into first base just ahead of the throw.

The Wildcats, however, would not score as a pinch runner was caught stealing, before two pop ups to second base ended the game.

"We had some communication problems and that's my fault, McBride said. "We didn't have the steal sign on in the seventh inning. Then at third base the kid just ran through the stop sign and didn't get back. You can't have these mistakes at this level."

"We had out chances today. South Central beat a good baseball team. This was a great experience for us and I hope to be back some day, because it was fun."

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