

Grove Wins PCL Baseball Title After Continental Coach Refuses Playoff Bid

Putnam County Sentinel – June 29, 1972

Columbus Grove Bulldogs, who a month ago believed they were co-champions of the Putnam County baseball league, reign alone today after the Continental team, which had shared first place with them, refused to participate in the controversial three-team playoff decreed by the school principals association.

Columbus Grove defeated Ottoville 3-2 in a pitching duel at Gomer Tuesday evening to decide the issue. Grove arrived at the Gomer field believing they were to play Continental in the first game of a two-game playoff, only to find Ottoville there instead.

Mark Selhorst's single in the bottom of the sixth inning broke a 2-2 tie and gave the trophy to Grove after the Bulldogs had trailed through most of the contest. It was only the sixth hit Grove was able to get off Ottoville's Gene Wannemacher.

Meanwhile, Kevin Altstaetter and Greg Verhoff limited the Big Green to only four safe blows.

Ottoville scored a run in the first inning without a hit. Joe Schlatterbeck reached base on a fielder's choice and circled the sacks on a bunt, another fielder's choice and a bunt.

Grove trailed until the bottom of the fourth when they scored twice on singles by Dave and Greg Verhoff, a bunt single by Mickey Halker, a walk to Selhorst, and a sacrifice fly by Altstaetter.

Wannemacher doubled in the next inning to tie the score for Ottoville. His hit drove in Miller who had walked.

Greg Verhoff, who went to the mound in the top of the sixth inning and was the winning pitcher, scored the winning run. He was hit by a pitch sacrificed to second and scored on Selhorst's single.

CONTINENTAL Athletic Director and Baseball Coach Steve Moore refused to go along with the Putnam County League playoffs and has forfeited his team's chance at the baseball championship.

However, Moore still considers his Pirates as co-champs and says he is going to purchase a trophy himself and place it in the school trophy case proclaiming the Pirates co-champs for 1972.

Moore was on vacation for the past two weeks and did not learn of the principals' action until he returned home Monday. "I got home Monday and they informed me that I had to be ready by Tuesday to play in the playoff," he said. "That's impossible."

He said that many of his boys, especially three key seniors, would be unavailable and that he could not possible get together his team which went to the regional finals this year.

"I CALLED Columbus Grove and told them I want nothing to do with the playoffs," Moore said. "If they want to play Ottoville, I told them to go right ahead but we are not going to play."

Moore said he could not understand the action taken by the principals, who ordered Pandora-Gilboa to forfeit a game to Ottoville which gave the Big Green a share of first place along with Continental and Columbus Grove.

"I don't know on what basis they could forfeit that game, especially since Pandora-Gilboa had made several attempts to play it. If Ottoville was demanding a chance at the championship, then the principals should have first demanded that they play a game with Pandora-Gilboa instead of just giving the victory to Ottoville," Moore said.

THE HASSLE all started when Continental and Columbus Grove finished out their league schedules with five victories and two defeats each, while Ottoville went 4-2 in league play.

Because all league games were not made up until the final week of school and Columbus Grove was involved in a Northwest Conference playoff at the time, while Continental was still in tournament play, Grove and Continental agreed to co-championships and to forego a playoff.

It was about three weeks later that the principals held a special meeting and decided to give Ottoville a share of the championship and voted for a three-team playoff.

Columbus Grove and Continental were to have played on Tuesday night of this week at Gomer. The winner was to take on Ottoville tonight on the same diamond for the championship.