

Delwal 1 win away from Johnstown trip

By STEVE KOWALSKI
STAFF WRITER

The people at Little Caesars can't own everything in town.

Mike Ilitch owns the Red Wings and this week struck a deal to buy the Tigers, but the Livonia Little Caesars baseball team has handed over the driver's seat to Delwal in the Livonia Collegiate Baseball League playoffs.

Left-hander Derek Wirsbaugh pitched a seven-hitter and Tom Kretschmer hit his second home run in as many nights as Delwal blanked Caesars 9-0 in a second-round game Wednesday at Livonia's Ford Field.

The loss dropped defending champ Caesars into the loser's bracket, where it will meet Walter's at 5:30 p.m. tonight at Ford Field. Walter's stayed alive in the double-elimination playoffs with a 10-5 win Wednesday over Hines Park Lincoln-Mercury at Ford Field.

Caesars coach John Moraitis isn't too concerned.

"We've got two starters (Andy Margolick and Brandon Endicott) left," he said. "I've come back and won in the loser's bracket. But these guys (Delwal) have a good team."

Delwal finished the regular season 1/2 point behind champion Caesars. The Farmington-based team will play at 8 p.m. tonight against the winner of the Caesars-Walter's game, and a win would send Delwal to next week's All-American Amateur Baseball Association championship in Johnstown, Pa.

If Delwal loses tonight, the LCBL championship will be decided at 5:30 p.m. Friday at Ford Field.

Pitching has been the key for Delwal, which owns a 2-36 record. Run average Mark Temple (North Farmington) will get the call tonight.

"I remember last year losing games 15-14 and I said, 'We're at least going to be pitching dead,'" Delwal coach Bob Peterson said.

Kretschmer gave Wirsbaugh a 3-0 lead in the first with a three-run homer, his eighth of the year. Delwal scored three more runs off losing

pitcher Mark VanAmeyde in the fourth, highlighted by a run-scoring double by Jason Valente and two-run single by Billy Hardy.

Wirsbaugh, who lost an earlier decision to Caesars, didn't need anymore help and he twice pitched out of jams this time. Caesars loaded the bases with one out in the third on a single and two walks but Wirsbaugh struck Jerry Shippey and got Aaron Mach to ground out to end the threat.

Dave Roman and Ed Taylor had consecutive singles in the fourth, but Wirsbaugh retired the next two batters.

"Derek has improved quite a bit, he's added a slider, has great control and mixes his pitches well," Delwal pitching coach Bruce Gerish said. "The key is he's mentally tough and he prevents big innings."

In Wednesday's first game, Walter's ace pitcher Mike Coleman walked nine hits but had enough to eliminate Hines Park 10-5.

Walter's trailed 5-4 after 3 1/2 innings before scoring five runs in the bottom of the fourth off Hines Park starter Chris Newton for a 9-5 lead.

Newton, who pitches for the University of Michigan, walked seven batters in three innings and fell to 2-2. Joe Brusseau (Borgos and Madonna) and Kevin Young (Farmington) each delivered two-run singles in the fourth, with Young's hit being the one that knocked Newton out of the game.

Keith Bozyk (Plymouth and Redford Catholic Central) allowed two hits, one walk and one run the rest of the way and left Hines Park coach Dave Carroll wondering why he left Newton in so long.

"When a kid is struggling and the umpire is not giving the strike zone it's sometimes best to take him out earlier," Carroll said.

Ed Gundry (Plymouth Salem) led Hines Park with three hits in four at-bats, including a two-run double in the third that tied the score 2-2.

BASEBALL

LIVONIA COLLEGIATE BASEBALL LEAGUE STANDINGS

| TEAM | W | L | T | O |
|----------------|----|----|---|---|
| Little Caesars | 21 | 9 | 0 | 2 |
| Delwal | 20 | 10 | 0 | 1 |
| Walter's | 18 | 10 | 0 | 2 |
| Hines Park | 16 | 14 | 0 | 0 |
| Wendy's | 8 | 21 | 1 | 0 |
| Tecumseh | 3 | 27 | 0 | 0 |

Batting Leaders (minimum: 60 at-bats)

| PLAYER | W | L | AVE. |
|---------------------------|----|----|------|
| Paul Pironello (Walter's) | 81 | 32 | .395 |
| Aaron Mach (LC) | 80 | 31 | .388 |
| Jason Valente (Delwal) | 62 | 24 | .387 |
| Jeff Shippey (LC) | 64 | 32 | .381 |
| Mike Giacomantonio (LC) | 77 | 29 | .367 |
| Joe Wirsbaugh (Delwal) | 60 | 21 | .356 |
| Jeff Pendell (Walter's) | 65 | 30 | .356 |
| Kevin Young (Walter's) | 60 | 29 | .352 |
| Ed Taylor (Walter's) | 60 | 21 | .350 |
| Jeff Schaller (Walter's) | 66 | 23 | .348 |
| Craig Overmire (Walter's) | 69 | 31 | .348 |
| Jim Solis (Delwal) | 78 | 26 | .333 |
| Ed McGee (Delwal) | 72 | 24 | .333 |
| Tom Kretschmer (Delwal) | 84 | 28 | .333 |

Home Run Leaders

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| Mike Giacomantonio (Caesars) and Tom Kretschmer (Delwal), 6 each; Ed McGee (Delwal) and Jason Gabel (Walter's), 3 each. |
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RBI Leaders

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| Jason Gabel (Walter's), 30; Craig Overmire (Walter's), 28; Noah Bremen (Delwal) and Mike Giacomantonio (Caesars), 22 each; Tom Kretschmer (Delwal) and Kevin Young (Walter's), 21 each; Tom Davey (Hines Park), 18. |
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Stolen Base Leaders

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| Jason Valente (Delwal), 26; Chris Munson (Delwal), 19; Andy Gagne (Caesars), 18; Ed Hardy (Delwal), 15; Joe Brusseau (Walter's) and Jason Pige (Caesars), 13 each. |
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Pitching (minimum 20 innings pitched)

| PLAYER | W | L | ERA |
|----------------------------|-----|-----|------|
| Dave Wood (Walter's) | 5-0 | 35% | 1.37 |
| Scott Rodgers (Hines Park) | 4-2 | 30% | 1.37 |
| Dave Roman (LC) | 3-1 | 25% | 1.39 |
| Todd Boike (Delwal) | 4-1 | 23% | 1.45 |
| Brian Freeman (Delwal) | 2-1 | 23% | 1.51 |
| Louis Moring (Walter's) | 3-1 | 20% | 2.36 |
| Mark Temple (Delwal) | 2-2 | 25% | 2.46 |
| Keith Bozyk (Hines Park) | 2-3 | 32% | 2.94 |
| Mike VanAmeyde (LC) | 6-3 | 57% | 2.98 |
| M. Coleman (Walter's) | 6-1 | 37 | 3.03 |
| D. Wirsbaugh (Delwal) | 6-1 | 38% | 3.08 |
| Brandon Endicott (LC) | 4-3 | 52% | 3.35 |

Strikeout Leaders

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| Jeff Paluk (Hines Park), 55; Mark VanAmeyde (Caesars), 48; Derek Wirsbaugh (Delwal), 36; Scott Rodgers (Hines Park), 29; Mike Coleman (Walter's), Dave Roman (Caesars) and Brandon Endicott (Caesars), 28. |
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PLAYOFF SCHEDULE

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| Thursday, July 30: 5:30 p.m. and 8 p.m. (championship) at Ford Field. |
| Friday, July 31: 5:30 p.m. at Ford Field (if necessary). |

Blues capture Mustang district

The South Farmington Blues won the Mustang District World Series last weekend at City Park in Farmington.

The championship effort completed a four-tournament season in which the Blues captured three titles and were runners-up once.

South Farmington finished with a 17-3 record and established itself as one of the organization's most successful Mustang teams of recent years.

"I've had more fun with this fine group of boys," manager Dennis Heraghty said. "They never quit, never stopped improving, and they always helped each other. These boys are winners."

World Series play started Tuesday with a field of 14 teams from the Detroit suburban area. En route

to the championship series, the Blues defeated Westland (11-0), Garden City No. 1 (9-5) and Lakes 1 (11-1).

Lakes fought back from the losers bracket to earn the right to meet South Farmington in the championship round on Sunday.

Lakes jumped in front 4-1 after four innings and gave the Blues their first loss, 5-4. South Farmington scored twice in the fifth, and Mike Wilk's solo homer sent the game into extra innings.

The Blues prevailed 9-5 in the second and deciding game. South Farmington took the early lead (3-0) with the help of a two-run homer by Matt Loidas.

Key hits by Wilk, Matt Gerroth, David Tjalsma, Brent Heraghty and a second home run by Lori-

do enabled the Blues to nail down the World Series title.

South Farmington had excellent pitching throughout the tournament, with Adam Harris and Anthony Tomey leading the way. Loidas pitched three critical innings in the final game.

Catchers Andy Gutierrez and Kevin Ternerowski complemented the pitching staff with fine individual performances. The defense also was up to the test, featuring outstanding plays by David Fleury and Brad Wochumurs in the championship series.

The other members of the Blues squad are Grant Weber, Justin Milus, Brad Barnie and Louie Hadley. The coaches are Chip Wochumurs, Ray Thompson and Bob Milus.

Caesars, Delwal win openers

Dave Roman and Aaron Mach led Livonia Little Caesars to a 5-2 win over Hines Park Lincoln-Mercury in Tuesday's Livonia Collegiate Baseball League playoff opener at Ford Field.

Roman (Livonia Franklin) pitched nine innings for the first time ever and earned the win with a seven-hitter, no walks and 11 strikeouts. Mach's three-run homer in the bottom of the ninth inning broke a 2-2 tie and sent Hines Park reliever Jeff Paluk (Plymouth Salem) home as the losing pitcher.

It was only the second homer of the year for Mach, who ended the regular season as the LCBL's second-best hitter with a .388 average.

"You weren't in a batter's slump, you were in a home run slump," Caesars coach John Moraitis said to Mach afterward.

Paluk relieved starter Scott

Rodgers (Salem) with one out in the eighth after Caesars' J.R. Taylor stroked a double off the fence to score Jerry Shippey (Westland Glenn) for a 2-2 tie.

Rodgers, who allowed seven hits, also surrendered an unearned run in the first.

Joe Weldenbach and Keith Bozyk had RBI singles for Hines Park. T.C. Raptis (Madonna), who doubled in the sixth, and Tom Davey (Plymouth Salem), who tripled off the fence in the seventh, scored the Hines Park runs.

Delwal pastes Walter's

Delwal erased a 3-2 deficit with six runs in the seventh inning to defeat Walter's 8-3 in another LCBL first-round playoff game Tuesday at Ford Field.

Tom Kretschmer had a three-run homer and Noah Bremen stroked a two-run double in the seventh off Walter's losing pitcher Steve Ross, who relieved starter Louie McKaig after five innings.

Kretschmer's homer was his league-leading seventh and he was tied after Tuesday night with Bremen for the team lead with 25 RBIs.

Jason Valente was 3-for-4 with two runs scored for Walter's and Mike Schwartzberger added a pair of doubles.

Dave Wood and Jeff Pendell (Livonia Churchill) had RBI singles for Walter's.

The winning pitcher was Todd Boike, who improved to 5-1 with a complete-game effort. McKaig was lifted with the score tied 2-2 after five innings so Ross suffered the loss for Walter's.

NFWB from page 1B

Temple had another two-run, first-inning single, and Sarnovsky also had two RBIs (the other on a bases-loaded walk). Gaughan and Pesci had two hits each.

Forrell pitched the last 2 1/2 innings to earn the victory in relief of Craig Benedict, who was added from the Plymouth Canton team for the tournament.

"We've got a scrappy bunch of kids," Gaughan said. "Our kids re-

ally play together as a team, and they don't get intimidated by teams with players who have the big press clippings."

After play was rained out Thursday, NFWB began Friday with a 7-3 win over Waterford. Pesci struck out 12 over seven innings while giving up four hits and five walks.

Jehle had two hits, including a three-run homer for a 5-1 lead. Heller had two RBIs, Ferguson and

Friedenberg two hits apiece.

NFWB will play the northern Indiana district champ in the first round of the regional, and coach Gaughan believes NFWB's pitching will be a plus for it.

"If you can win the first game or two, then the favorite in the tournament becomes whoever has the deepest pitching staff," he said. "We have a deep pitching staff, but we have to win the first two."

LC takes regular-season title

A sweep of its two-game weekend series with the Tecumseh Green Glens, enabled Little Caesars to clinch first place in the Livonia Collegiate Baseball League.

On Friday, Caesars edged Tecumseh 5-4 thanks to a solid pitching performance by Mark VanAmeyde, who went the distance and fanned eight.

Caesars got all it needed offensively in the second inning when Mike Giacomantonio slammed a three-run homer.

On Saturday, Caesars routed Tecumseh 8-0 in a make-up game from earlier in the season.

Brandon Endicott was the winning pitcher, going the first five innings and striking out five. John Spolyer went the final two innings and recorded the save.

Caesars got all it needed offensively in the second inning when Mike Giacomantonio slammed a three-run homer.

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