

Canton preps for Harrison

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Plymouth Canton's baseball doubleheader at South Lyon Thursday provided a couple of things:

•It allowed the Chiefs to stay in game shape while just about everyone else was either vacationing or glued to the TV following Elian's travails;

•It kept their attention focused on the difficulties that lie directly ahead.

Or, as Canton baseball coach Scott Dickey put it, "It should be fun."

Dickey was referring to Monday's pivotal game against Farmington Harrison, a game that could go a long way toward deciding the champion of the Western Lakes Activities Association's Western Division.

"We're excited for Monday," said Dickey. "Harrison is a big game. We haven't beaten them in two years."

Although Thursday's twinbill at South Lyon meant little, convincing the Chiefs of that would have been difficult — especially after they split to run their record to 9-4. The Lions (5-7 overall) are not a great team when at full strength, and according to coach Mark Thomas they were well below that for these games.

"We only had one senior here," Thomas said, noting the very reason most coaches refuse to schedule games during spring break. "But a lot of guys that don't get a lot of playing time were able to get some, so that was good."

BASEBALL

JV players, coach? "No," Thomas answered. "But in the first game, we looked like a JV team."

Canton had no trouble in the opener, rolling to a 12-3 triumph. Jon Johnson was among the batting leaders in this waxing, slugging two doubles in three trips and driving in two runs.

Jim Wisniewski was another, collecting two hits in two official trips — one of them a double — to drive in two runs and score three more. Bryan Kny totaled three hits, including a double, scoring twice and driving in one, and Brad Smigielecki had a double and two runs scored.

The beneficiary of all these offensive fireworks was pitcher Matt Staley (2-0). Staley went all seven innings, giving up two earned runs on eight hits and three walks, striking out six.

Oh yes — about that disclaimer. The umpires showed up an hour before the scheduled noon start, saying they had been misinformed and they had another commitment that would force them to leave by 3:30 p.m. That left two choices for Canton and South Lyon: play one game, or adopt the three-ball, two-strike format used by the Catholic League.

"I don't mind it as a coach," said Dickey of 3-2 ball. "It helps our pitchers. But I don't think our hitters like it much."

The second game was far different. Canton's Brent Vasher and South Lyon's Tony Kern

duced evenly through 4½ innings before the Lions got some key hits to take charge and eventually win, 4-2.

South Lyon scored first, getting a run after two were out and no one was on base in the bottom of the third. A walk to Jason Rohrhaft was followed by a double by Kern that delivered the run.

Canton immediately retaliated, knotting it a 1-1 in the top of the fourth on back-to-back singles by Wisniewski and Russ Caid with one out and a sacrifice fly by Jay Sofen.

But the Lions extra-base power showed up in the bottom of the fifth. With one out, Jamip Gasparilla walked and Jason Zylka was hit by a pitch. Rohrhaft came through with a two-run triple to make it 3-1; Kern's single scored Rohrhaft to make it 4-1.

Canton's best opportunity to catch the Lions came in the sixth. Brian Esser led off with a single and Oliver Wolcott walked, putting two runners on with no one out. But Wisniewski's grounder to third was turned into a double play, dampening the rally.

The Chiefs did get one run on a double by Caid, making it 4-2, but that was as close as they could get.

Vasher went the distance and absorbed the loss to even his record at 1-1; he gave up four earned runs in six innings. Kern was the winner for South Lyon.

Despite the split, Dickey was pleased with what he saw. "I'm not happy to lose, but we didn't play that bad," he said. "We hit the ball hard. We've been hitting the ball well all year."

Wayne salvages baseball split with John Glenn

Matt Mackiewicz wasn't quite Superman, but he certainly saved the day for the Wayne Memorial baseball team.

The right-hander made a pair of sterling defensive plays at third base and provided some clutch relief pitching in the bottom of the seventh inning, giving the Zebras a 4-3 win and a split of a doubleheader Thursday at

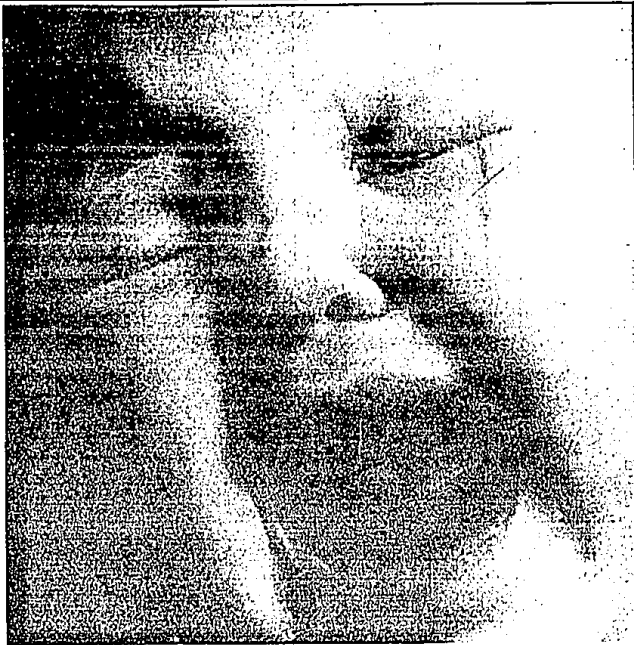
Westland John Glenn.

Wayne is 3-5 overall, 2-1 under interim coach Tom Wakefield. Glenn, which captured in the first game easily, 10-0, behind the two-hit pitching of Dave Mijal, is 4-8 on the season.

With Wayne clinging to a one-run lead in the eighth, Glenn threatened when Chad Sansom and Mark Wacker each singled,

off Wayne starter Ryan Ybarra in the seventh. Dave Mijal was then intentionally walked to lead the bases with nobody out.

On came Mackiewicz, the right-hander, and he responded with a fielders-choice forecourt at the plate followed by two called strikeouts. Ybarra, who won his second straight start, limited Glenn to a pair of hits.



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