

Hawks C1

big out when she needed it."

Harrison left the bases full in the second inning after scoring two runs and again in the fifth. That made Teachman a little nervous, wondering if the Hawks were leaving the door open for a big inning by the Yellow Jackets. "What you think about then is the gremlins are out, and that means funny things can happen," Teachman said.

There's two out in the seventh with two runners on; you're up 2-0. There's a pop-up; the outfielders run into each other, and you lose, 2-2. That's a gremlin game."

Harrison had four its nine hits off Country Day pitcher Brigitte Westhoff in the second inning and scored twice on back-to-back RBI singles by Katrina Vitale and Kim Spaulding.

Emmett singled home another run in the fourth inning, and Spaulding was hit by a pitch with the bases full in the fifth, forcing in the fourth run.

Vitale, Spaulding, Emmett and Ternes had two hits apiece. Jenny Winger had the other.

"We didn't get the timely hits today (to break the game open), although in both games we had players in clutch situations hit screamers right at somebody," Teachman said. "But the defense was good and Lindsey dominated both games."

Ellen Hector and Anna Levitt hit doubles for the Yellow Jackets (9-15), and Natalie Lockwood had the third hit.

"We had three or four well-hit balls right at people," Meyers said. "If they're a few feet either way, it could be a different game."

Winning the district, according to Teachman, was a reward for his players, who lost some big games by close scores at the end of the regular season.

"Because our league was so darn tough, every game was a catfight," he said. "The fact we're always on the edge of winning and the competition in our league was so tough, maybe that prepared us for this."

"For us, the difference between winning and losing is very fine. Unfortunately, that doesn't make for a loose team. They know the next play could decide the game."

Country Day played its best ball at the end of the season, Meyers said, winning five of its last seven games.

"Harrison is a very good team and deserved to win," he said. "I thought we played well enough to give ourselves a chance to win. (Westhoff) pitched her heart out and kept us in the game."

HARRISON 8, SEAHOLM 3: Junior shortstop Kelly Taylor went 4-for-4 with a pair of doubles and four RBI to lead the Hawks in a first-round district game Saturday.

Gayle Ternes and Sarah Toble added two hits apiece. Ternes had a double and scored two runs. Kristin Schrock had a hit and two walks, and she also scored twice.

Harrison had a four-run second inning and tacked on a pair of runs in the fifth and seventh frames as well. Alex Stefanek had two hits, including a double, and scored Seaholm's run in the third inning on Carrie Gonzales' RBI single.

Jenny Gatt hit a two-out triple for the Maples (9-19) in another inning, but a strikeout by the next batter left her stranded there.

Winning pitcher Lindsey Emmett allowed five hits, struck out six, walked three and hit one. The Hawks had 10 hits and eight walks from Seaholm pitcher Tracy Skelley.

"I was really happy with the win, because I thought they were a team that would try to make their season in the last two weeks," Harrison coach Mike Teachman said. "They did stuff that I thought would bother us. They're a good running team and a good bunting team."

COUNTRY DAY 5, RENAISSANCE 3: Winning pitcher Brigitte Westhoff threw a three-hitter against Detroit Renaissance (20-7) in another district game Saturday. She walked four and fanned five.

Kate Rhodes had two hits, including a double for Country Day. Lauren Adams (one hit) walked twice and scored two runs. Hector, Rhodes and Carolyn Boyd added one run each.

Chiefs avenge loss to Raiders, 2-1

BY C.J. RIZAK
STAFF WRITER
cjrak@observer.com

SOFTBALL

This was a case of the climax coming at the start of the story.

In last Saturday's state district softball tournament at Plymouth Canton, four Western Lakes Activities Association squads squared off. Two of them — North Farmington and Canton — had met nine days earlier in the WLAAC championship game.

Fittingly, these two antagonists met again, but this time in a district semifinal. The winner would certainly be favored against the survivor of the other semi between Plymouth Salem and Livonia Stevenson.

North had defeated Canton twice during the season, including a 9-0 romp in the WLAAC final. But those two didn't count, as Canton coach Jim Arnold was quick to point out.

"This is the one that counts," Arnold said after the Chiefs upended North, 2-1. Buoyed by that success, Canton went on to capture the district crown, beating Livonia Stevenson 5-1 in the final.

The Chiefs, 22-11 overall, advance to the Division I regional at Royal Oak Kimball against Warren Mott Saturday.

Farmington Mercy goes against Detroit Mumford in the other regional semifinal.

"I thought both teams played extremely well," Arnold said of Canton's district battle against North. "I thought it would be a different game than the last time we played them."

It was. The Raiders, who finished their season at 24-12, were first to draw blood — but it took four innings and a singular effort by Blad Russell to do it.

In the top of the fifth, Russell led off the inning with a single, the first hit of the game off Canton pitching ace Laura Stewart. Russell stole second and then, with one out, she stole a run when Christo Hendryckson grounded out to second.

Russell broke for third on the play and Chiefs' first baseman Brianna McNicholas tried to stop her out, but the throw to third was wide and Russell scored, giving the Raiders a 1-0 lead.

Canton, however, answered immediately. For four innings the Chiefs' offense had been stymied, failing to get a hit off

North pitcher Both Danielewicz. Stewart reached base to start the inning with a bad-hop bouncer off Samantha McComb; with Katie Conlon in to run, Angie Nevo executed a sacrifice bunt to move her to second.

Canton's first hit was a big one, a grounder down the third base line by Kaitlin Anderson that went for a double but kept Conlon at third. A walk to Christine Kiesel led the bases with one out.

Jenna Perrino popped out to second, pulling the Raiders to within an out of escaping the inning unscathed. But Megan Coultas, a sophomore second baseman who bats ninth in the order, wasn't about to allow that to happen.

Coultas cracked a single to center that scored two runs and gave the Chiefs a lead they never relinquished.

A pair of hits in the sixth put two runners aboard for North with two out, but Stewart — who tossed a three-hitter, striking out seven and walking one — got Kristy Reinhardt to fly out to center to end the threat.

And North's chances, as it turned out, Danielewicz nearly, equaled Stewart's performance; the freshman gave up three hits and one walk, striking out four.

"We had chances," said North coach Dave Brubaker. "We didn't get the clutch hits. And if you don't get the timely hits, you're not going to win."

"They got the clutch hits. My bat is off to Coultas, their No. 9 hitter."

For Coultas, it was indeed a big day. Although the Chiefs were favored to beat Stevenson — which defeated Salem 7-6 in the other district semifinal — it was the Spartans who struck first.

Amanda Jankowski opened the third with a single and, after a Stewart balk moved her to second, Mark King doubled to score her. Stewart then buckled down and struck out the next three batters.

Again, the Chiefs answered immediately. First baseman Debbie Gafesky dropped a pop up by Kiesel to start the inning; then, after a single by Perrino, Coultas came through again, doubling off Stevenson starter Kelley Hutchins to left-center field to drive in two runs.

A dropped fly ball by right-fielder Sarah Pinto led to more trouble for Stevenson. Michelle DeVos laid down a bunt and Coultas escaped the rundown to score, making it 3-1. After Jonelle Brown grounded into a

fielder's choice at third, Stewart and Neu followed with RBI singles, giving Canton a 5-1 advantage.

It was all the Chiefs would need. Indeed, in the next 3 1/2 innings, the two teams managed just one base hit between them. Stewart again tossed a three-hitter; she gave up one earned run and did not walk a batter, hitting one and striking out 13.

"It's been the story of our year," said Stevenson coach Jen Knapp, her team finishing at 9-16. "One bad inning. It's been frustrating. But I'm very proud of them. They had lost to Salem twice, so it was great just getting here."

"We don't have enough power hitters to score five runs. But they were never down on them."

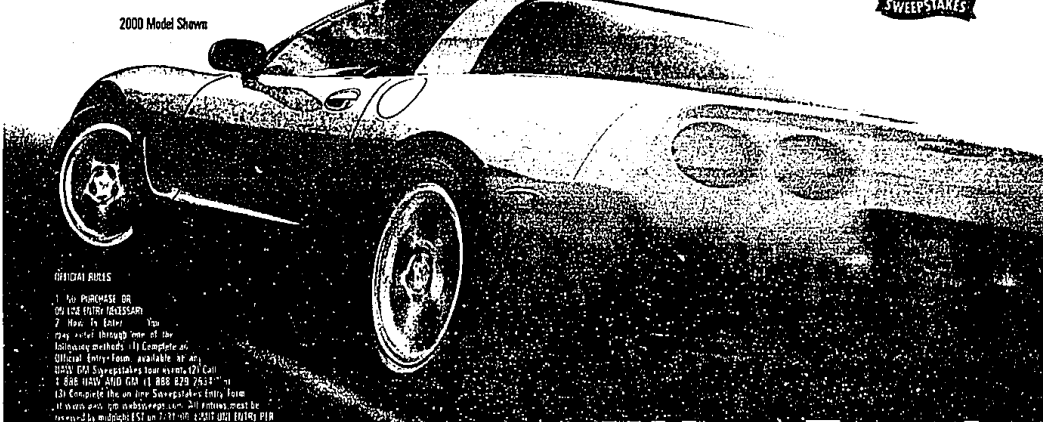
As for Canton and the upcoming regional tournament, Arnold isn't ruling anything out. "Whatever happens now is a bonus," he said.

"They're playing with confidence. I think they finally believe in themselves. I've said from the start that this is a good team with a lot of athletic ability."

It also has a season that isn't over yet.

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