

Cobras rebound with Series win

BY DAN O'MEARA
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BASEBALL

The NFWB Cobras received a needed shot in the arm with a victory Friday evening in the 16-year-old National Amateur Baseball Federation World Series being played in Northville.

After losing their first game Thursday, 1-0 to the Dayton (Ohio) Classic, the Cobras rebounded with a 6-3 win over the East Cobb Rangers from Cobb County, Ga.

The Cobras not only gave their pool-play prospects a boost; they also defeated a longtime nemesis.

"We go down to Georgia every year and have developed a nice, little relationship (with the Rangers), and we've never beaten that team," Cobras manager Dan Petry said.

"It was time to step up, if we're ever going to win a World Series, and beat them. It was a big win, not only to prove we can beat (East Cobb) but that we can beat anybody."

The Cobras, who had lost four previous games to the Rangers, had two more games to play Saturday in their pool, starting with the 2-0 Indiana Bulls.

The semifinals will be played at 9 a.m. and noon today, followed by the championship game at 3 p.m. All games are at old Northville High School on Eight Mile Road.

"We're playing very well as a team," Petry said. "We have four games against four great teams, and whatever

happens after that is all gravy.

"Part of youth baseball is getting players facing great competition, and winning is a bonus. Being able to play four more games is very important."

NFWB starter Dan Graham pitched five innings to get the win Friday, allowing three runs on five hits while striking out six.

He coasted through four innings but ran into trouble in the fifth when he issued his only walk and hit a batter, causing Petry to make a trip to the mound.

The Rangers scored two runs with the help of two hits and had two runners on with two outs. Graham ended the threat with a strikeout.

"I wanted him to get out of the fifth inning, and that was it," Petry said, adding he didn't want a relief pitcher

to enter in a tight spot and struggle. "I'd rather have him start the inning off, and then it's his inning."

Andy Wingert worked the last two innings, but he had to pitch out of trouble, too, in the sixth before retiring the side in the seventh.

East Cobb loaded the bases with a single, a hit batter and a walk, but Wingert escaped with no damage being done with a long fly ball to right field.

"He created that situation, but he bowed his neck and got out of it," Petry said. "Sometimes it all works out."

NFWB gave Graham a 2-0 lead in the first inning. Two errors allowed Kevin Zerbo and Doug Pickens to get on base, and Ben Darga (3-for-3) hit a two-run double.

"That's not typical of that team,"

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Hornets reap reward for dedication

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Conventional wisdom has it showing up is half the battle in any endeavor.

The Farmington Hills Hornets did that and more this summer in the Girls Incredible Fastpitch Softball League.

The Hornets, who are sponsored by Leo's Concoy Island, were serious about playing softball and were rewarded for their efforts.

SOFTBALL

They ended the regular season 15-1 and won the Varsity North Division. They will meet the South champion for the league title 1 p.m. today at Livonia Ladywood.

"We had a good, consistent turnout from our key players," Hornets assistant coach Rob Schrock said. "All were pretty committed and were regular attendees. Whereas, a lot of teams in the past had trouble in the summer with family vacations and summer jobs."

"Getting players to be there every game is always a challenge. We had a real strong commitment from the (Harrison) high school varsity team. They were really focused and serious about trying to play good ball this summer."

The Hornets, who are managed by Jack Smylie, capped the regular season Thursday by winning two games from the Farmington Flash; 18-1 in a three-inning mercy and 8-1 in five innings (time limit).

Leo's pitcher Beth Leeb scattered five hits and didn't walk a batter while striking out three in the first game.

Abbey Cleland led a nine-hit Hornets attack by going 3-for-3 with a double. The Hornets also benefited from eight walks.

Jacquie Smylie and Heather Sinawi had two hits and scored



STAFF PHOTO BY PAUL HICKMAN

Play at the plate: Jacquie Smylie of the Hornets was safe despite an attempt by the Flash's Catherine Shaw to make a putout.

three runs apiece. Ellen Doughty and Erin Held chipped in one hit and two runs each. Cleland also scored twice.

Kristin Schrock struck out 12 and allowed just three hits in the second game. She issued five walks.

Doughty had two of Leo's five hits, including a double, and two RBI. Schrock also had a double, drove in a run and scored one.

Kelly Yekim added a single and an RBI. Smylie a single and a run scored and Sinawi, who reached base on a walk and an error, two runs.

Lindsey Abbott singled and scored Farmington's only run.

Another reason for the Hornets' success was weak pitching in the North Division, according to coach Schrock, while the Hornets had two good ones.

Kristin Schrock posted a 7-0 record and Leeb was 7-1. Erin Held had the other pitching victory.

"When we did go up against the better pitchers, our girls did a good job hitting, and we played good defense," Schrock said.

"We had good, consistent pitching from Kristin and Beth. We had two pitchers we could go with the whole summer, and they were there every game."

"We also had good, consistent play from some of our younger girls who are coming into high school,

Please see SOFTBALL, B3



STAFF PHOTO BY PAUL HICKMAN

Winning pitcher: Beth Leeb threw a five-hit victory in the first game Thursday.

If trend continues, title game to go OT

Better budget a little extra time for the playoff championship game in the Metro Summer Hockey League.

Overtime, it seems, is part of the MSHL regular-season champion Lakers' game plan.

The top-seeded Lakers qualified for tonight's league championship game with a 7-6, double-overtime victory Thursday night over the No. 4 Huskies in a tournament semifinal game at Suburban Training Center in Farmington Hills.

The Lakers reached the semifinals, of course, with an overtime victory over the Spartans.

Their opponent in the 7 p.m. championship game will be the sixth-seeded Warriors, who were 8-4 winners over the No. 7 Bulldogs in the other MSHL semifinal match.

MEN'S HOCKEY

The Huskies held a 6-3 lead after two periods Thursday, but the comeback started 57 seconds into the third period on a goal by Jim Wheaton (Plymouth), his second of the game.

Bryan Marshall (Livonia) drew the Lakers within a goal at 9:09, Wheaton assisting, and 67 seconds later the score was tied because Tony Keshishian (Plymouth) scored, Steve Sharp drawing the key assist.

Scoring is a big part of summer hockey, but defense still rules in the clutch and the Lakers tightened things up after regulation.

They were rewarded just 39 seconds from the end

of the second overtime when Mike Vigilante scored to end the struggle. Scot Curtin (Redford) assisted on the game-winner.

Curtin and Nick Jardine scored the other Laker goals with Marshall and Curtin getting two assists in the game.

John Pickle started in goal for the Lakers, with Lanny Jardine coming in at 7:53 of the second period and playing out the game.

Aaron Kilunnen scored twice for the Huskies, with Joe Kondratiek (Canton), Trent Danavetta, B.J. Gaylord and Mark R. Pietila scoring one goal apiece.

Kondratiek, Gaylord and John Pietila had two assists each. Travis Miller started in goal for the

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FARMINGTON — FARMINGTON HILLS SPORTS SCENE

Whalers tune in 1310

The Plymouth Whalers are teaming up with Fox Sports Radio, AM-1310 the X, to broadcast all of the Ontario Hockey League team's games this coming season.

"This is a great move for our organization and one we think will benefit the team and our fans," Whalers director of marketing Don Seaver said.

"Over the past couple years, we have seen our fan base continue to grow, and the need to find a station with a stronger signal was something we wanted to address."

"Fox Sports Radio provided the perfect fit for us. We think our fans will be very pleased with the improvement in radio broadcasts this year."

The first broadcast will be the season opener in Windsor on Sept. 13, beginning with a pre-game show at 7:15 p.m. Game time is 7:30 p.m. Plymouth opens at home Sept. 16 against Erie.

The Whalers had been heard on WSDS 1480 the past four seasons. Pete Krupsky remains the team's play-by-play announcer with Nick Gismondi as color commentator.

Youth hockey program

Suburban Hockey is taking registrations for the FUNdamental Hockey League at Suburban Training Center, 23996 Freeway Park Drive in Farmington Hills.

The 25-week program, which runs from September through March, consists of a weekly Mighty Mite program for kids ages 4-6, as well as leagues for mites (ages 6-8), squirts (9-10) and pee wees (11-12).

The league is dedicated to the development of skills and knowledge of the game with a focus on fun.

For more information on the league or other programs, call Suburban Hockey at (248) 478-1600 or visit the www.suburbanhockey.com Web site.

FIHA, Flyers unite

The Farmington Hills Hockey Association in conjunction with the Farmington Flyers, the Farmington Public Schools unified high school hockey team, plan to form a junior varsity team for the upcoming season.

The new team will afford players who attend one of Farmington's three high schools the opportunity to play for the Flyers varsity.

"Our two organizations have had a good relationship, and we thought it was time for us to develop a more formal arrangement," FIHA President Lucy Oakley said.

"We're happy to see the relationship expand to this degree, because we can give more players an opportunity to develop, reach a higher skill level and, hopefully, improve to the level of the varsity program," Flyers varsity coach Mike Harris said.

The team will play in the JV division of the Little Caesars Amateur Hockey League as an FIHA team, wear the Flyers colors and play several games prior to the varsity contests.

Fall hockey openings

The Farmington Hills Hockey Association has openings for its fall season. Boys and girls born in 1995 or 1996 are eligible. Call the FIHA at (248) 478-1593 and press key No. 2.

Registration forms and additional information will be available at the Farmington Hills Ice Arena, 35500 Eight Mile Road.

2002 baseball tryouts

Fall tryouts are being scheduled for the 13-year-old Michigan Rattlers travel baseball team for the 2002 season.

The season consists of league, tournament and national play, which amounts to approximately 65 games.

Players and parents of players interested in playing should call Jim Martin at (248) 477-9830.

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