

Warriors toss blanks at Mustangs, Wolves

BY DANIEL STICKRAOT
STAFF WRITER

Walled Lake Western has found a winning recipe as of late that frustrates all of its opponents.

The Warriors are using solid defense, timely hitting and the strong pitching of junior right-hander Lauren Talbot to turn back eight consecutive competitors.

Such was the case at the Division 1 softball regional Saturday at West Bloomfield. Western made it eight straight shutouts – the last four coming in the state tournament – with a 1-0 victory over Clarleton in the semifinals and a 1-0 triumph over Birmingham Marian in the finals.

The Warriors, who reached the state semifinals last season and played Troy Tuesday in the state quarterfinals at Orionville-Brandon, have won three of its four games 1-0 and another 2-0, including that 2-0 decision in 10 innings over Walled Lake Central in a district semifinal and a 1-0, eight-inning triumph over North Farmington in a district championship game the previous weekend.

"We played great defense out there," said Talbot, sharing the moment with her teammates. "We've been playing very good defense and I have confidence in my defense. We've done this something like (eight) straight

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times. I hope we can keep it going."

Against Marian (20-18) in the regional final, Talbot finished with a four-hitter, striking out six and walking two. Her numbers were identical against Clarleton hours earlier, and she only allowed runners to reach second base twice and allowed only six total baserunners in that contest.

Western scored its only run in the bottom of the fourth against Marian, when Turi Burt's RBI bunt single scored Jenna Hussin, who reached base via a bunt single and advanced over to third on a pair of passed balls.

The Mustangs failed to push the equalizer across despite having a runner in scoring position during the final three innings of the final.

"We lost to them twice in the regular season, 7-2 and 6-0, so this was a major improvement," said Marian coach Mike Mileczarski, whose team finished 1-11 in the Catholic High School League but came up big to win its district. "This team came on strong the past couple weeks."

"We just couldn't get the one key hit against Western," he added.

"We put runners in position and couldn't come through. We had the hits, but we couldn't do

it in a row. Had we'd been able to score one run, then perhaps the outcome could've been different."

In the second semifinal against Clarkston, Western's Burt supplied the offensive heroics in the top of the sixth as she laced a single to deep center that scored Talbot's courtesy runner, Katelyn Scanlan, from second base.

Clarkston's Kelly Robinson took the loss despite scattering only six hits with a trio of strikeouts. The Wolves had runners in scoring position in both the third and fifth innings but couldn't come through with the clutch hit to push a run across.

Clarkston coach Al Land said he anticipated this type of matchup.

"We talked about it, that this could be a one-run game and we had to take advantage of our opportunities," said Land, who is losing six seniors from his 25-13 squad.

Talbot's a very good pitcher and we knew that coming in. But it's not like we didn't have chances. We had runners in scoring position more than once, but we couldn't get that one big hit and that was the difference."

Marian had no difficulties with Royal Oak Kimball in the first semifinal of the day, scoring seven runs during the first two innings before rolling to a 10-0 victory in six innings.

Largemouth Bass virus snakes way to county

Largemouth bass virus (LMBV) reared its ugly head for the first time in Michigan in the fall of 2000, sending alarm waves through the bass fishing community. At that time, the virus was believed to be contained in Lake George, a 565-acre inland lake in Branch County on the Michigan/Indiana border.

Since then, however, the virus has spread and has now made its way into southeastern Michigan lakes, including Lake Orion in Oakland County, the furthest north the virus has ever been found, Woodland Lake in Livingston County, and Devil's Lake in Lenawee County. There was a fish kill in Woodland Lake and 100 percent of the fish tested there turned up positive. On Lake Orion, two of 30 fish tested positive and in Devil's Lake four of 30 turned up positive. To date LMBV has been found in a total of nine lakes, all in southern Michigan.

LMBV is one of over 100 naturally occurring viruses that affect freshwater fish. Unfortunately, as a relatively new virus, not a lot is known about it including its origin and the mechanism through which it is spread.

Although it can be deadly to largemouth bass, LMBV is not known to infect humans. Infected fish are considered safe to eat as long as the flesh is thoroughly cooked.



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LMBV can infect other species of fish including crappies, bluegills and smallmouth bass, but apparently is only deadly to largemouths.

LMBV causes bloating in the swim bladders of adult largemouth bass causing them to remain in the warm, oxygen-depleted water near the surface, which eventually leads to suffocation. They often have trouble remaining upright, appear lethargic, and occasionally have sores and/or lesions on their skin.

"When the fish are most susceptible is in the heat of the summer," says Jim Francis, a DNR fisheries biologist at the Livonia District Office. "There are lower levels of dissolved oxygen then, and the fish are already stressed out by the warm weather."

"We're asking people to try to abstain from fishing in the heat of the summer," Francis says.

"Try to minimize their stress levels and don't carry them around all day in a livewell."

The DNR also asks anglers and boaters to take the following steps to help prevent the spread of LMBV:

■ Clean boats, trailers, other equipment thoroughly between fishing trips to keep from transporting LMBV, as well as other undesirable pathogens and organisms, from one water body to another.

■ Take special care to clean fishing equipment when you are done fishing known locations of the virus.

■ Do not move fish or fish parts from one body of water to another, and do not release live bait into any water body.

■ Handle bass as gently as possible if you intend to release them and release them as quickly as possible.

■ Refrain from hauling the fish for long periods in live wells if you intend to release them.

■ Minimize targeting of largemouth bass during the period from mid-July to mid-August.

■ Report dead or dying adult largemouth bass fish to Michigan Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Division offices (517-373-1280).

Contact Bill Parker c/o Outdoors, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009.

RICE

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Riker said, "We'll prepare day in and day out; we'll come in and practice; we'll do the things that are necessary in order to win."

"And that is field groundballs and field flyballs, try to consistently make contact, and as pitchers try to throw strikes."

The Warriors were solid in every phase of Tuesday's contest.

Petry, a senior bound for the University of Michigan, struck out 10 and walked none in improving his record to 10-0. He effectively mixed a fastball,

curveball and changeup to limit the Huskies (19-14) to five hits.

Northern's lone run came in the top of the sixth when Jeff Naz led off with a single, stole second and scored on an error.

"I started out good, and the defense makes it easy for me," Petry said. "I just let them put the ball in play, and I know that the other eight guys will make their plays."

"Most of the time Matt was ahead, and he changed speeds real well," Riker said. "That's his strength – changing speeds, throwing strikes and getting ahead of the hitter. He had an exceptionally good breaking ball today."

Pickens and Nolen were a combined 1-for-10 in the regional tournament, but their bats awoke against Northern.

Pickens singled twice, homered, drove in three runs and scored two; Nolen, the No. 4 hitter in Rice's power-packed lineup, went 2-for-3 with an RBI and two runs scored.

The Warriors opened the scoring with a run in the bottom of the second inning. Vytas Ray doubled with one out off Huskies ace Josh Harrison and raced home when David Kosmalski dropped a single into left field.

Pickens led off the third and hit a foul fly that Northern first baseman Randy Bernosky mis-

judged. It was a costly mistake as Pickens lined the next pitch he saw over the right-center field fence.

Nolen then made it 3-0 with a towering shot over the 350-foot sign in straight-away center.

Brother Rice touched Harrison for three runs in the fourth – Pickens' sharply-hit single plated Dan Lentz (2-for-4) and third baseman Max Kelmigian smacked a two-out, two-run double off the fence in right – and the Warriors got their final run in the sixth when Lentz singled, advanced to third on a pair of wild pitches and scored on Pickens' sacrifice fly.



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