

Thurston Comes From Behind To Take Mack Honors

As long as there's me, there's hope.

You can believe it and for proof there's the Thurston baseball team, the Greater Livonia American Division baseball champs this year.

Winning in the Livonia League earned Thurston the right to play the Final Connie Mack regional.

It didn't LOOK too good when Thurston lost to Midland in the first game in the two-day and all tournament. The pressure definitely was on Thurston.

But Thurston bounced right back and proceeded to win four straight games, clinching matadors with a 6-2 win over the same Midland team Monday in the championship game.



BIG GUN for Thurston: in its bid for the division championship in the Connie Mack play is Pitcher John Thurston. The all-Observerland choice during the spring high school season and Steve Kreager have kept the team going and made it one of the best in the state. (Observer photo)

As a result, Thurston goes on to the state Mack tournament at Marshall, which starts Thursday, and where the Livonia Royals, the National Division champs from Livonia, also will be playing.

Bob Hollandsworth fired a seven-hitter in beating Midland. He fanned seven and walked only one batter.

Thurston took a lead in the third inning when Gordie Eszes doubled. Scott Stacey walked and Ken Chopek drove both in with a hit.

Then came a three-run uprising in the fourth when

Dennis Benedict led off with a homer, Stu Rose, Eszes, Stacey and Chopek singled in order for two runs.

In the sixth, Rose singled, took two bases on a passed ball and scored on Stacey's sacrifice fly.

ONE-HIT PITCHING by John Munson, who fanned eight, enabled Thurston to down Bishop Conception, 2-1, following a 5-4 win over Fint in a pair of Sunday games.

Stacey singled and scored the first Thurston run and then

Stacey doubled and scored on Munson's hit for the game-winning run in the 2-1 verdict.

Bob Hood worked 5 and one-third innings in the 5-4 triumph, but needed help from Hollandsworth and Steve Kreager to save the day.

Kreager worked to four batters and struck out three. Chopek's long double knocked in Munson and Hood in the second inning.

Then in the fourth, Hollandsworth singled, Chopek was safe on an error and Benedict singled for one run. After Chopek was out trying for third,

Dennis Poppenger rapped a long homer over the fence for two runs.

THURSTON DESERVED a better fate Friday when play began.

The Townshippers wound up with a defeat and victory despite the brilliant pitching of Bob Hood and Steve Kreager, who in the two games allowed only a total of one run and seven hits.

It was just that Hood, Stevenson High star and added from the Hubert team for the Mack regional, was bested by

Run Zink of Midland in a spectacular pitching duel, 1-0, in the tourney's opener.

Hood fanned 10 and didn't walk a man. But he gave up two singles and hit a batter in the fourth inning and that proved the deciding factor.

His mates, meantime, were held to four hits by Zink. Gordon Eszes accounted for two of the safeties, a single in the first and another single in the sixth.

Ezes each time stole second, but that's as far as any Thurston man got.

Dennis Poppenger and Hood

accounted for the other Thurston hits off Zink's 9.

KREAGER'S CODE was to eliminate Saginaw, 3-0, by scattering three hits in the eighth and ninth.

Eszes got the lead off the scoreboard in the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th.

When he drilled a man in the fourth, Thurston was second by Bob Grastan. Eszes singled and 1 upped the lead to 2-0.

Stu Rose, another Stevenson star who was picked up by the Hubert team, drilled a single in both Poppenger and Hood

Royals Sweep 4 Games For Mack Title

Happy year it's been for the boys who played baseball for Livonia's Bentley High.

They won the Suburban Six League title and then banded together virtually intact to form Crowe's Royals and won the Greater Livonia Connie Mack National Division title.

NOW THEY'RE champs again... victors in a regional Mack tournament that started at Livonia and finished at Ypsilanti.

The Royals swept through four tournament games, dimaxing matters with a 3-2 win over Dearborn Sunday.

So, the next step is the state Mack tournament which begins on Thursday at Marshall.

Ken Gawkowski, a star hurler at Bentley, allowed six hits and fanned five to win for the Royals against Dearborn.

Gawkowski also poked a

homer after Terry Mills doubled for two runs in the third inning.

The game's winning run was chased in the sixth when Joe Beg singled, went to third on an error and scored on a passed ball.

THE ROYALS SWEEP into the finals by downing Inkster, 8-0, Friday and then followed with a 5-4 win over Ann Arbor Baskin Robbins Saturday.

Gary Battle hurled the

shutout against Inkster and was supported by some heavy hitting.

The game actually was called after five innings when the

tournament's "timey" rule whereby when a team has a seven-run lead after the fifth inning, the game is called.

he faced and lost a game when he gave up a single in the fifth inning with two outs.

Mike Perno ended a hot streak in the first inning by hitting the Royals with the first home run they actually needed. But it didn't help them as they scored three runs on singles by Ken Gawkowski, Joe Berg and Perno, a walk to Al Hunsaker, and their singles by Bill Re and Battle.

THE LIVONIANS scored twice more in the fourth when Perno and Gawkowski singled and came around on errors.

Perno, battle and Gawkowski each had two hits.

David Rice allowed six hits in beating Ann Arbor. He struck out five.

THE ROYALS SCORED against Ann Arbor in the first inning on doubles by Berg and Battle.

The second two runs came in the fourth when Scheyer walked, Terry Mills singled and Gawkowski walked to fill the bases. Berg scored Scheyer with a sacrifice fly and Mills registered on an error.

In the sixth high Walden doubled. Perno singled for one run and Mills singled to drive in what proved the winning run.

NO CHANCE for Bari Bates, of Illinois as he tries to score against Garden City in the Coll College tournament. GC Catcher Greg Donnelly had the ball in ample time and blocked the plate so well that Bates never did touch it. (Observer photo by Harry Mouthe)

Area Netters To Compete In Observerland Tourney

Outstanding tennis players from Observerland as well as Northville will compete in the annual Livonia Tennis Club tournament Friday, Saturday and Sunday on the Stevenson high courts.

Entries in the various divisions will be accepted until 10 p.m. Thursday after which members of the club will make the first round pairings.

The tourney is open to residents of Livonia, Farmington, Garden City, Westland, Plymouth, Bedford, Southfield, Lathrup Village and Northville.

COMPETITION WILL be in the following classes: Men's singles, Men's singles for those 35 and older, women's singles, singles for boys 18 and under, men's doubles and mixed doubles.

No entry fee of \$1.50 will be charged for singles and \$2 in doubles.

The schedule for the first round includes: men's singles, Friday, 9 a.m.; men's singles, 35 and older, Saturday at 11 a.m.; women's singles, Saturday at 1 p.m.; boys 18 and under, Friday at 9 a.m.; men's doubles, Saturday at 3 p.m.; and mixed doubles, Saturday at 5 p.m.

The semifinal and championship rounds will be played Sunday.

The tourney rules provide that: USLTA rules will be official; players who fail to report 30 minutes before the scheduled time of a match will default; play shall be continuous, with 10

minute rest periods between the second and third sets; all players must bring two USLTA approved balls per event entered; water takes new and lost takes old will prevail; the tournament director reserves the right to make decisions in the best interest of the tournament.

Entries should be sent to R. Decker, 33193 Maplelun, Farmington - phone 477-8851 or to R. Kinney, 16757 Levian Rd., Livonia - phone 428-1148.



Byrd Wins Flat Rock Feature

Danny Byrd, the Dearborn Heights veteran, drove to his second win of 1976 in the 25 lap ARCA Late Model Stock feature at Flat Rock Speedway.

Byrd passed pole sitter Bob Roe in the third lap and was slowed only for two caution flags, one in the 10th lap when John Anderson, Jay Parr and Eno Hage tangled in the fourth turn, with Anderson retiring from the event due to a flat tire, and Parr and Hage re-starting in the rear of the field.

On the restart Byrd held a three car length lead over Fran Harden and Jerry Makara, both of Westland, and was pressed by both drivers until again bringing out the caution flag.

Heat races went to Jay Parr, Pontiac; Harry Farmer, Livonia; and John Riddle, Laubertville. Parr won the push-out and Fran Harden the dash.

BIRMINGHAM'S Steve Gee slides into second on a steal while Garden City's Darin McHugh reaches high in the air for the catcher's throw. Birmingham topped Garden City in the Coll League tourney in Garden City. (Observer photo by Harry Mouthe)

Baseball Brochure Wins Awards

Michigan State's 1970 baseball brochure for press, radio and TV has won two top national awards.

The 36-page printed press-season facts book was named to receive the John H. Koles prize from the National Collegiate Baseball Writers' Association for the best university division baseball book of the year.

It also won a first from the College Sports Information Directors of America in a category for winter and spring sports brochures.

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Girls Win Tourney, Go After Another

Livonia's Spring Valley Sluggers have won one post season tournament and are fighting hard but are one game down in a second.

Champions of the Livonia Recreation Dept. Girls Class F Slug-Fitch Softball League, the Sluggers trounced three other squads last week to win the six-team Mic Mac Tournament held at Rouge Park.

The Sluggers, girls aged nine to 13, clobbered O'Shea, 23-1; thumped Mic Mac No. 1, 20-6; and walloped the Mic Mac All-Stars twice, 18-7 and 18-5.

The Sluggers won a trophy for their team effort and two

girls on the squad were honored with Most Valuable Player awards.

Receiving the MVP citations were Susan Thompson, 12-year-old second-sacker who is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Thompson, of 3150 St. Martins, and Sally Lewis, 13-year-old pitcher and center-fielder who is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Lewis, of 31446 Gable.

In the nine-team Detroit Invitational Tournament, the Sluggers haven't fare quite so well.

They've whipped Westland Junior League, 8 to 4, and Jelferies, 23-3, but were bombed by the Wheelers, 18-4, in competition where two losses mean elimination.

The Sluggers were scheduled to meet the Mic Mac All-Stars Tuesday night and if victorious will meet the Wheelers at 1:15 p.m. today (Wednesday) at Javine Field. Six Mile and Conant, Detroit.

The Wheelers, undefeated thus far, are leading the tournament.

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