

Pioneers fold in first game, lose twinbill

For six innings, it seemed as if Oakland University's mens baseball team had indeed reversed the dismal trend that led it to 28 losses in 32 games a year ago.

The Pioneers led visiting Findlay (Ohio) College 6-3 entering the seventh, and last, inning in their season-opener Wednesday. But then — as it happened so many times in 1987, their first season of baseball since 1981 — they collapsed, allowing a resurrected Findlay to post a 9-7 win in nine innings.

That paved the way for a sweep, which Findlay accomplished by routing OU 14-0 in a second game halted after six innings by the 10-run mercy rule.

The Pioneers had their chances in the opener. Lots of them. They

trailed 3-0 entering the bottom of the third inning after Findlay's Troy Hill banged a solo homer and pitcher Tracy Valentine followed with a two-run shot.

OU rallied quickly, however. Mike Gunn doubled and scored on Rob Alvin's ground out, and Chris Takemoto blasted a two-run homer to even the score at 3-3 after three.

The Pioneers took a 5-3 lead in the fifth on Tom Zerona's single, Alvin's run-scoring triple and Takemoto's sacrifice fly. They added another run in the sixth on Tim Bradley's single and stolen base, and Gunn's single.

Through six innings, OU starter Pat Sadowski had pitched well except for his third-inning lapse. That changed in the seventh. Hill doubled

baseball

to start Findlay's inning and, after a strikeout, pinch-hitter Bob Strickly hit a two-run homer to pull the visitors to within 6-5.

Derek Smitz relieved Sadowski and struck out the first batter. But Valentine doubled, and after an intentional walk, Mike Grimes singled in the tying run. A double-steal brought home the go-ahead run for Findlay.

OU didn't fold. Alvin singled and Takemoto walked to begin the Pioneer seventh. Johnny Dee relieved

Valentine and was greeted by Dennis Milobar's game-tying single. Dave Sepak then walked to load the bases with none out, but Dee recovered to retire the next three batters.

THE PIONEERS had a chance to win it in the eighth, but Findlay second baseman Chris Wilson robbed Alvin of a game-winning hit. Findlay's Derek Hutchinson broke the deadlock with a solo homer in the ninth, and Bob Schultz added an insurance run with a run-scoring single.

Dee got the pitching win, hurling three scoreless innings. Alvin, Gunn, Zerona and Takemoto each had two hits for OU, with Takemoto driving home three runs and Alvin delivering two and scoring three times.

Smitz was the losing pitcher, surrendering four runs on five hits and a walk in 2½ innings.

The second game was no contest, as OU starter Scott Tucker was tagged for six runs on four hits in 1½ innings. He was followed on the mound by Scott Penner, John Jacoby and Jeff Dorfman. Only Dorfman distinguished himself with 1½ scoreless innings, giving up two hits and a walk. He struck out two.

Milobar had two of OU's seven hits. Two of Valentine's three hits were doubles — he drove in five runs — and Schultz slammed a three-run homer in the fifth for Findlay (5-6). Mike West buried six shutout innings for the win.

OU plays at University of Detroit Tuesday.

Ex-area players have U-M rolling

The University of Michigan baseball team is on a roll, due in part to the play of three former area standouts.

The Wolverines had won 10 straight games as of last week and boosted their record to 11-5. Tom Brock, a senior right fielder from Grosse Pointe and a Dearborn Drive-Ed graduate, is hitting .429 and is tied for the team lead in home runs with three. He is second on the team with 14 RBI. Brock's two-out, eighth-inning, pinch hit three-run homer capped a double-header sweep over East Carolina.

In six games, Brock hit safely in nine of 15 plate appearances.

Greg Haeger, a freshman first baseman/pitcher from Redford Catholic Central, is fifth on the team in batting at .345. He has had two homers and nine RBI. Haeger has a game-winning RBI. Haeger, an all-state pitcher for the Stars, a state-champion Charvacka, has not performed on the mound for Michigan. He has completed 103 bating chances without an error.

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