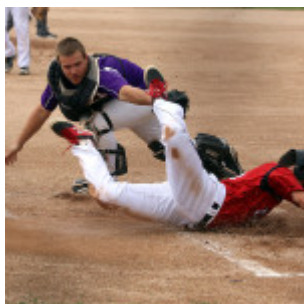


Cats fall to Mother Nature, Ottawa on senior night



Louisburg catcher Alex Dunn attempts to tag out an Ottawa run during the Wildcats's doubleheader Thursday at Lewis-Young Park. Louisburg fell to the Cyclones 9-2 and 2-0.

Louisburg's doubleheader with Ottawa couldn't have been bigger as far as the Frontier League standings were concerned.

The Wildcats were tied with Paola for second place going in and Ottawa was just a game ahead in first. A sweep, or even a split, would keep them in contention going into the final game of the season.

Thanks to Mother Nature it took more than two days to finish the doubleheader, and like Mother Nature, Ottawa put a damper on Louisburg's chances of a title. The Cyclones swept Louisburg 9-2 and 2-0 on Thursday at Lewis-Young Park.

The doubleheader originally started Tuesday, but due to inclement weather, Ottawa took an 8-2 lead into the sixth inning on Thursday and completed the sweep.

"I thought we competed for the most part," Louisburg coach Jeff Lohse said. "Ottawa is a good team and we were really a play away or a hit away from making game one a lot closer than what it was."

“I would like to see our base on balls go down from a pitching standpoint. We are pretty good when we make the other teams put the ball in play. Walks, especially lead-off, eventually come back to haunt you.”

In between games, the Wildcats honored seniors Mitchell Caldwell, Lucas Smith and Ethan Caldwell as the three played their final game at Lewis-Young Park.

All three have played vital roles this season as Mitchell has served as the team’s starting second baseman, Ethan as the team’s starting right fielder and Lucas came into the season as the Wildcats’ No. 1 pitcher.

“All three guys have played a very big role in our program,” Lohse said. “They work hard and play the game the right way. We wish them nothing but the best in the future.”

Walks did hurt the Wildcats (9-9) in the first game as they issued eight free passes. Leadoff walks in the fifth and sixth innings turned into three runs for Ottawa.

The Wildcats actually jumped out to the early lead. Cole Kramer was hit by a pitch to lead the first inning off, stole second and later scored on an RBI single from Austin Henderson.



Louisburg’s (from left) Mitchell Caldwell, Lucas Smith and Ethan Caldwell

were honored during senior night Thursday at Lewis-Young Park.

It didn't last long as Ottawa scored two runs in the second and four more in the fourth to take a 6-1 lead. Louisburg did get a run back in the fourth when Henderson doubled and later scored on an RBI single from Colton Smith.

Smith and Henderson accounted for four of the five hits in the opener as Louisburg struggled to get much going offensively.

Sophomore Dalton Stone kept Louisburg in the game in the nightcap. He pitched five innings and gave up just two runs on two hits, but Mother Nature intervened one more time on Thursday and cut the game short as it was called after five innings.

Singles from Smith and Grant Harding were the lone hits from Louisburg, however, the Wildcats hit the ball hard on several occasions – they were just right at the Ottawa defense.

Ottawa scored two runs in the third inning and it was all it needed to get the sweep.

“Dalton has thrown very well in his last three outings,” Lohse said. “He is starting to figure things out a little bit. We were able to put the ball in play, but most of the time it was right at them.

“Ottawa's centerfielder ran down a couple of balls that would have normally been in the gap. We still had way too many fly ball outs, but at least we are putting it in play and making the defense work.”

Louisburg will play its final regular season game of the year today when it travels to Spring Hill for a doubleheader. First pitch is set for 4:30 p.m.