

## **Platte County can't duplicate late-game magic**

Citizen Staff Report

In its first two games in the Northland Tournament last week, the Platte County baseball team rallied for last-at-bat victories. But, in its final two games in the tourney, which annually features some of the best high school teams in the metro area, the Pirates could not produce any late-inning magic.

Platte County was bounced from the tourney after two losses to Park Hill South over a three day span.

On April 18, Park Hill South won 6-4 in eight innings; two days later, the Panthers edged the Pirates 3-2.

The back-to-back setbacks dropped Platte County's record to 9-3 after a 7-0 start.

"We wasted a golden opportunity to defeat them in seven innings on Wednesday when we got stupid on the basepaths," Platte County coach Greg Jaros said. "Friday, our bats were cold and we didn't execute small ball very well. We also had too many walks by our pitchers Friday."

In the first game versus Park Hill South, the two teams traded runs to a 4-4 tie after seven innings. The Panthers came up with two runs in the eighth off Platte County relievers Brett Slobodzian and Justin Wilson. Jeff Cline started the game and threw five innings, allowing five hits and three runs, while striking out four.

The three Pirates hurlers combined to walk eight PH South hitters and three scored.

Offensively, Platte County racked up nine hits, including two from Brennan Blaha. Kyle Knox, Tyler Ryun, Nick Maxwell, Jake Guthier, Taylor Sampsell, Duncan Billings and Mike Hills all had solo hits; Guthier drove in two runs.

Two days later, Platte County returned to Park Hill South for the rematch, with a spot in the tournament championship game on the line.

Again, the game was tight. Park Hill South scored twice in the first frame off Platte County starter Cameron Kuhn. Platte County tied the game 2-2 with solo runs in the third and fourth innings, before the Panthers chased Kuhn with the go-ahead run in the fifth.

Platte County did not answer this time and had only one base runner the final two innings. Overall, Park Hill South pitcher Aaron Frakes allowed just three Pirates hits and struck out eight.

Pirates 7, NKC 5

After scoring twice in the bottom of the seventh for a 5-4 win over Excelsior Springs in the first round of the tournament, Platte County staged an even greater last-inning comeback April 17 versus visiting North Kansas City.

The Pirates, trailing 5-1, sent 11 hitters to the plate in the seventh and scored six runs for a 7-5 victory.

Platte County had six hits in the inning, including RB!-singles by Ryun, Guthier, Hills and Marty Beamer. Ryun, who went the distance, closed out the Hornets in the bottom of the seventh and improved his record to 3-0.

Platte County is scheduled to return to action April 26 at St. Joseph Lafayette and April 30 at Harrisonville. The Pirates will play host to Cameron at 4:30 p.m. May 1.

## **Bluejays break losing streak**

Citizen Staff Report

The West Platte baseball team finished last week exactly the way it hoped — with a dominating lights-out performance and a 11-1 victory over St. Mary's in Weston.

Jays' pitcher Ryan Humes was unhittable through five innings as he picked up his second win of the season, allowing three walks and striking out three batters.

"Ryan threw his first no-hitter and helped to set the tone of the game," said West Platte coach Ryan Ramey. "Our team was in need of a win after dropping four straight. The bats started to come alive and when that happens everyone starts to have more fun and it is easier to make plays. Hopefully this game will help our team chemistry."

The West Platte bats certainly were lively, as the Jays batted for a .440 average (11-for-25) in the game and improved to 2-4 overall. Austin Lintner went 3-for-3 with two runs scored and two RBI, while Matt Parker also plated two runners and scored two runs while going 2-for-4. Other Jays with good offensive nights

were Steven Wheeler, 2-for-3 with a triple, an RBI and two runs scored; Ben VanAmburg, 1-for-3 with a double and an RBI; and Billy Krohne, 1-for-3 with a double an RBI.

On April 17, the Jays ran into a buzzsaw of a team in the Lawson Cardinals, who won the game 16-4 and scored at least two runs in each of the five innings. Joe Kassanavoid improved to 3-0 for Lawson by throwing three innings and allowing four hits while striking out eight West Platte batters. Humes took the loss despite the Jays scoring four runs in the first inning and allowing five hits in three innings.

“On a positive note, I was glad to see the team fight back in the bottom of the first when being behind by four,” Ramey said. “Three of our four team hits were in the first and we were able to plate four runs on the board ourselves. However, over the course of the game, the six fielding errors mixed in with the Lawson hits let the game get out of reach.”

The four Jays with hits were Wheeler, Parker, Krohne and Humes. The loss dropped the Jays (2-4 overall) to 1-3 in the KCI Conference, with two conference games scheduled this week and a tournament at Barstow Saturday.

## **Panthers struggle against KCI foes**

Citizen Staff Report

Last week was a long one for the North Platte baseball team, as it was pummeled in three games by two of the KCI Conference’s best teams.

The Panthers finished the week by hosting Lawson in a doubleheader in Dearborn, and the Cardinals overmatched their opponents in the second game, 18-0. Lawson had 28 hits in the game, while North Platte managed only one hit but had five fielding errors.

The first game was the completion of a rain-out game from March 27, so Lawson was considered the home team. The Panthers kept the game scoreless until the third inning, when the Cardinals erupted for 12 runs. Lawson went on to win the game 15-0 on 12 hits and six North Platte errors.

“Both games we collapsed in one inning,” said North Platte coach Dan Biermann. “In game two, it was the first inning when Lawson’s bats remained hot with another 12 hits and 12 runs. In game one, it was the third when Lawson pounded out nine hits along with two errors to bring 12 runs in.”

Brenden Hensley pitched the first game for North Platte, with centerfielder JT Kempt brought in relief towards the end. The North Platte pitching staff, which is generally anchored by Mitch Giger, has struggled without him as he has battled a nagging shoulder injury.

“Our pitching staff is struggling with injuries and control issues which need to be corrected quickly,” Biermann said. “Although it was a rough night for us, we still had some positive things happen. We played a strong Lawson team and we just have to keep working.”

After the doubleheader, the Panthers had an overall record of 3-6 and a 1-5 KCI record, with a Monday home game against Barstow and three road games scheduled for this week.

North Platte also hosted East Buchanan for a contest April 17, and were able to keep the game close until the fifth inning. The Bulldogs scored five runs in the first two innings, but after four frames the Panthers were only down 5-3. However, three fielding errors in the fifth inning led to four East Buchanan runs.

North Platte plated two more runs in the fifth and sixth innings before allowing seven runs in the seventh and losing 18-5.

“We played with them through four innings, then the bottom fell out,” Biermann said. “We need to keep working on our fielding and mental mistakes. The kids continue to play hard and we are making progress.” The Panthers collected eight hits in the game, led by Hensley’s 2-for-3 performance and doubles from Zach Sears and Jacob Homan.