

C-J Sports

Cardinal Mooney gains semis; ND girls repeat in Class C

By Richard A. Kiley

Experience pays off. For the second-seeded Lady Cardinals of Mooney, the edge of "being there before" led directly to six of the team's seven runs against Fairport last Friday night, May 29, in a Class AA quarterfinal game at McAvoy Park in Irondequoit.

After falling behind 3-1 in the third inning, Joette Abbey's squad kept its composure and rallied for five runs in the fourth inning, to score a come-from-behind, 7-5 win over the Red Raiders. The win moved Mooney (15-1) into the Class AA semifinals against No. 3 Irondequoit. The game against the Braves was scheduled to be played on Wednesday, June 3, at McAvoy Park.

The top-seeded Cadets of Hilton (22-0) were scheduled to play No. 4 Webster on Tuesday, June 2.

Mooney's win over No. 10-seed Fairport was almost a carbon copy of last year's semifinal game between the two softball titans. In that Mooney win, the Lady Cardinals scored two runs in their final at-bat to beat the Red Raiders 6-5. Mooney eventually fell to Hilton 1-0 in the 1986 Class AA sectional final.

The Lady Cardinals' win over Fairport this time around was not as dramatic, but it did take some nifty base running and timely hitting for them to pull it off.

Abbey's squad also received a gutsy pitching performance from Noelle Feeney (14-1), who yielded five hits while going the distance.

After Fairport went quietly in the top of the first inning, Mooney jumped out to a 1-0 lead in its first at-bat without the ball even leaving the infield.

An errant throw on Cathy Nietopski's bunt enabled the Mooney senior to reach second base. After she stole third base, Nietopski scored on her sister Theresa's slow ground ball down the third base line, to give Mooney an early 1-0 lead.

The Red Raiders tied the game in the top of the second inning, then took their first lead in the top of the third. Jen Millard began the inning with a walk, and reached third base on a two-base throwing error by Mooney catcher Mary Beth Prognos. Millard later stole home, to make the score 2-1 in favor of Fairport. Sandy Rossler increased the advantage to 3-1 with an RBI walk later in the inning.

The Lady Cardinals sent 10 batters to the plate in the fourth inning, combining clutch hitting with textbook base running to open up a 6-3 lead.

After Theresa Nietopski and Prognos both bunted their way on base, Nietopski stole third base and home plate, pulling Mooney to within one run, 3-2. Cheryl Lennox's double put runners on second and third before Prognos scored to tie the game when Padulo's infield ground ball was misplayed.

Then Lennox scored from third base on an errant throw by Fairport catcher Monique Thomas, to make the score 4-3 in favor of

Mooney, and Julie Kolb doubled Padulo home, upping the lead to 5-3.

Kolb later scored to make it 6-3 on Marge McGuire's comebacker to Fairport pitcher Tracey Coviello. The Red Raider hurler opted to get McGuire at first base, and Kolb scampered home with what turned out to be the game-winning run.

Much like last year's semifinal game, however, Fairport would not go down easily. After Cheryl Ashman reached on an error in the top of the fifth inning, she scored three batters later on Nancy Boudreau's single, to pull the Red Raiders to within two runs, 6-5.

Fairport scored its last run in the top of the sixth inning. With one out, Christie Potempa and Millard singled to give Fairport runners at first and second. Potempa then scored when Sarah Bowles' bunt was misplayed, pulling Fairport to within one run, 6-5.

But Mooney added an insurance run in its half of the sixth inning, when Lisa Serio singled and came around to score after the ball ended up in right field, thanks to yet another Fairport fielding miscue.

Feeney retired the Red Raiders in order in the top of the seventh, to propel the Lady Cards into the Class AA semis.

Mooney earned the quarter final game with a 13-5 win over No. 15 Greece Arcadia. In that win, Feeney pitched a five-hitter.

For the second consecutive year, the Elmira Notre Dame girls' softball team is the best in Section 4 Class C.

Wayne Coburn's No. 1-seeded Lady Crusaders achieved that status by beating No. 2 Whitney Point, 4-3, in the sectional final game played at Kattelville Athletic Association Field last Saturday, May 30.

Notre Dame (14-6) reached the championship game by beating No. 8 Spencer-Van Etten, 11-2 and No. 4 Deposit — the team Coburn's girls defeated in last year's final game — 10-2. Both games were played at the Catholic school in Elmira.

The win over Whitney Point sets up a Far Western Regional rematch with Wilson High of Buffalo, which defeated Coburn's squad in last year's Class C state playoff.

The game between the Crusaders and Wilson (Section 6) was scheduled to be played at McAvoy Park on Tuesday, June 2.

Wilson (15-5) advanced to the Far West Regionals by nipping Portville (16-5) 5-4, in eight innings. Meg Thompson tripled and was singled home by Paula Maynard, to score the winning run in the top of the eighth.

Wilson, which went on to win the state Class C title last year, was spurred by two hits apiece from Thompson and Missy Zabel. Molly Streeter went the distance for Wilson, scattering nine hits and striking out four.

The rematch against Wilson has Coburn and his squad looking to avenge last season's loss in a big way.

"We want to play Wilson," Coburn said. "Last year we outscored our opponents in the sectionals something like 36-5, so I think it will help us that we had a little tougher time



Michael N. Aydoğan

Mooney pitcher Noelle Feeney put her recent control problems behind her by pitching seven strong innings against Fairport.

this year. We won't go up there prepared to blow anybody out. It's the team that wants it the most that will win it."

Coburn termed last Saturday as a "wild day" — and that was before his team clinched its second consecutive championship. In addition to the temperature reaching the mid-90s, Coburn had to deal with the team bus breaking down in Binghamton on Route 17.

And if that wasn't bad enough, one of the four cars needed to deliver his players to the championship game got lost. The car contained two starters and two reserves. The missing players finally showed up in the bottom of the first inning.

Whitney Point jumped out to a 1-0 lead in the top of the first inning over the somewhat shaken Lady Crusaders, but Notre Dame recovered and scored three runs of its own in the bottom of the first inning.

After Whitney Point tied the contest in the fifth inning, Notre Dame scored the winning

run in its final at-bat.

Tina Maloney led off the seventh inning with a single, and went to second after the ball was misplayed in the outfield. After Coburn sent in Abbie Cox to run for Maloney, Lisa Bouslas faked a bunt and ripped the ball down the third-base line. A throwing error then allowed Cox to come home with the sectional-clinching run.

Lisa Johnston was another offensive star for Coburn, pounding out two hits in three at-bats for the afternoon.

Once again it was Kris Vetukevic going the distance for Notre Dame. The Lady Crusader pitcher also helped herself at the plate with a triple.

Coburn considers himself and his team lucky to have overcome the adverse conditions that plagued the Lady Crusaders prior to the sectional championship.

"I think it really unnerved the kids,"

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