

DeSales' boys win, girls lose in title games

Cannon, Vedora key two-out, two-run rally

By Richard A. Kiley
Staff writer

Yogi Berra, who is famous for saying, "it ain't over 'til it's over," might want to use the DeSales baseball team as a reference.

The Saints, who made a habit of winning games in the late innings and even one a couple during their last at bat during the regular season, waited until the Section 5 Class D championship game to pull off their biggest comeback of the year.

Trailing 5-4 going into the bottom of the seventh, top-seeded DeSales staged a dramatic two-out, two-run rally to nip No. 3 Bradford, 6-5, at Silver Stadium last Saturday, June 10.

"These kids had the feeling that they couldn't be beaten," said Frank Pane, who has coached DeSales to victory 30 times in the last 33 games. "We won this one even though we didn't play as well as we could."

It marked the second consecutive league title for the Saints, who finished the season a perfect 15-0. DeSales scored a come-from-behind, 8-7 win in eight innings over Pavilion in last year's Class C championship at Silver.

Bradford, which defeated No. 2 Friendship to advance to the title game, finished its season at 16-3.

Last Saturday morning's game at 500 Norton Street was eerily similar to DeSales' win over Pavilion, which — like Bradford — took a one-run lead into the bottom of the seventh and eventually lost.

DeSales' final at bat didn't look promising after Paul Priebe flied to short right field and Jim McDermott was caught looking at a third strike to put Bradford — the defending Class D champions — within one out of winning two consecutive titles.

But Bradford pitcher Jeff Goltry committed a major mistake when he nailed Dean Askin with a 2-0 pitch right on the kneecap. The DeSales right fielder quickly shook off the pain by stealing second on Goltry's first pitch to Matt Cannon.

"I knew we had a chance if we could get Cannon and (Steve) Vedora to the plate because they're great fastball hitters," Pane said.

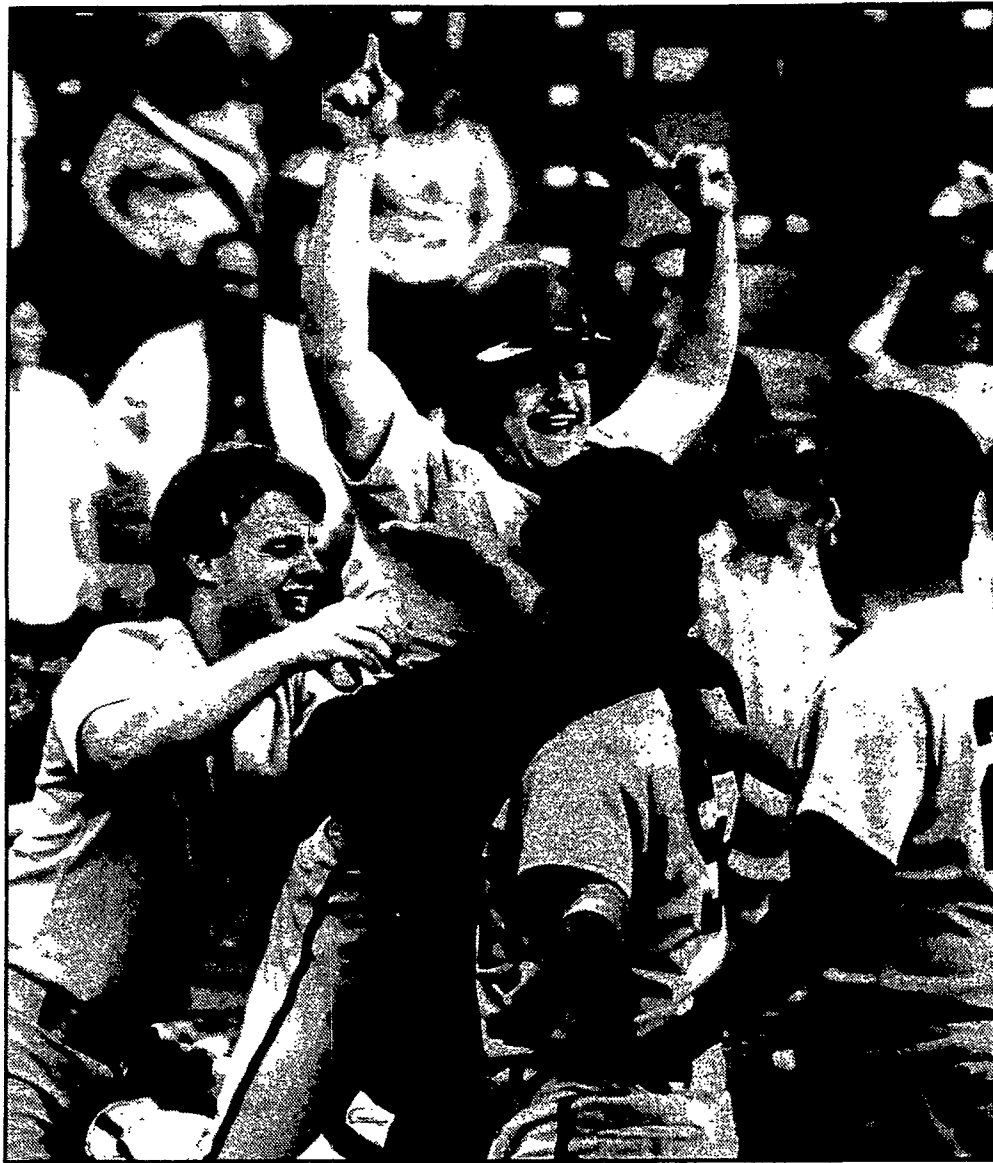
Cannon then laced a Goltry fastball into center field for his fourth hit of the day, scoring Askin with the tying run.

But the rally did not end there. Vedora then smashed another fastball off the left field wall to score Cannon and earn the Saints back-to-back crowns in two different classes.

"We told the kids that they've batted against Hobart pitchers with better fastballs, and we realized (Goltry) wasn't getting his breaking ball over," Pane said after watching his team's win. "I thought they might (intentionally) walk Cannon to pitch to Vedora, but I'm glad they didn't."

It was an amazing ending to an otherwise so-so performance by the Saints, who committed four errors and squandered an early 2-0 lead.

DeSales scored two runs in the bottom of the first inning when Askin walked, stole second and scored on a single by Cannon.



Steve Vedora (above) is greeted by DeSales players, coaches and fans after coming through with the game-winning hit in the Saints' come-from-behind, 6-5 win over defending champion Bradford in the Section 5 Class D championship game at Silver Stadium. Jim Vedora (at right) delivers a pitch for DeSales after coming in for starter Frank Pane Jr. during the title game Saturday, June 10.

Courier photos
by
Linda Dow Hayes

The DeSales outfielder moved to third on an error and later scored on a sacrifice by Vedora.

Bradford took a 3-2 lead with a three-run third inning, and the ball never left the infield. DeSales pitcher Frank Pane Jr. bailed in two runs and the other Braves' run came on an error.

DeSales tied the game at 3-3 with two outs in the bottom of the fourth when Aaron Mantagna walked, stole second and scored on Ron Cecere's single.

After Bradford scored to make it 4-3 in the top of the fifth, DeSales again pulled even again when McDermott walked, stole second and moved to third on an errant throw before scoring on Cannon's bloop single.

DeSales finished the game with six runs, eight hits and four errors. Bradford had five runs, seven hits and two errors.

Pane gave up three runs — two of them unearned — in three innings of work. Jim



Vedora went four innings for the win, giving up two runs (one unearned).

Cecere had two hits, including his run-scoring single in the fourth.

DeSales advanced to the championship by beating fourth-seeded Prattsburg, 6-3, in a Class D semifinal game at Cohocton on Tuesday, June 6.

The Vikings (14-4) actually outthit the Saints, 8-5, but they were victimized by five errors.

Pane allowed six hits and two runs before he was replaced by Jim Vedora in the sixth inning.

DeSales scored quickly with a run in the first inning when Askin bunted for a single and scored after three consecutive walks. The Saints made the score 4-0 in the second inning, thanks to two Prattsburg errors, a triple by McDermott and a single by Steve Vedora.

After Prattsburg narrowed the margin to

Continued on page 15

Early 8-0 deficit spells doom in 18-13 setback

By Richard A. Kiley
Staff writer

DeSales played nearly flawless softball in reaching the Section 5 Class D championship game at Cohocton.

Against third-seeded Bradford in the title game, however, bad breaks finally caught up with coach Pat Luzzi and his fifth-seeded Saints.

Seven fielding errors, several more uncharacteristic mental errors and a few more freaky incidents all added up to an 18-13 Bradford win at Cohocton on Saturday, June 10.

Bradford roared to an 8-0 lead after two innings, scoring two runs in the bottom of the first inning and six more in the second. The Saints blew a golden opportunity to cause some damage in the second inning when they had the bases loaded and failed to score a run.

A gusty wind blowing out toward left and center field caused defensive problems for DeSales outfielders, who may have been feeling the effects of the three bus rides they had to take to play the game.

The championship game was originally scheduled for June 9, but a torrential downpour in the Southern Tier on Friday night caused officials to cancel the game. The only problem was that Luzzi and his team were already halfway to Cohocton when the game was moved to Saturday.

"We actually drove all the way down there in anticipation of playing; it was tough on the girls emotionally when we learned that the game had been cancelled," said Luzzi, whose team fell to Avoca in last year's Class D championship.

The cancellation provided another problem as well. Luzzi said that because of the friendly rivalry the girls have with the boys on the DeSales baseball team, the girls were hoping to play Friday night and — if they won — put a little "pressure" on the boys in their championship game against Bradford.

Instead of playing the game, however, the softball Saints had to get back on the bus for the long ride to Geneva. And they had the additional pressure the next night of knowing that the boys won their game against Bradford in dramatic fashion.

After watching his players dig themselves into a huge hole on Saturday night, Luzzi may have wished the game was postponed again. The Saints did recover somewhat from the shaky start, but could never take a lead.

DeSales scored a single run in the top of the third and enjoyed its first big inning with three runs in the fourth to make it 8-4. Danielle Boncaro, who took the loss on the mound for the Saints, delivered the big hit of the inning with a three-run triple. She was thrown out, however, trying to stretch the hit into a home run.

Any chances of a DeSales comeback were virtually ended in the Braves' half of the fourth inning, when Bradford scored seven runs to balloon its lead to 15-4. Luzzi said that most of the runs were a result of fielding or mental miscues.

"If the game didn't have so much meaning, it almost would have been laughable because of the crazy things that happened," said the DeSales coach, who had the game videotaped. "It looked like that tape of bloopers and blunders. I've never seen a game like this in the three years I've been coaching here."

In one instance, Luzzi had to attend to left fielder Stacie Cook — usually a flawless fielder — when the junior was hit above the eye by the ball. She was not hurt on the play.

"It was just a crazy game," Luzzi said. DeSales scored three runs in the top of

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