

Hilgards come up big late, hand Bears 2-1 defeat

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
June 22 2017 7:15 AM





BELLEVILLE – Fans who came out to Belleville's Whitey Herzog Field Wednesday night saw themselves a pretty good pitcher's duel.

Both Jack Lanxon of Belleville and Storm Coffman of Metro East were keeping the opposite teams off-balance with some key pitches and finding ways to get out of jams.

In the end, though, the Hilgards came up with solo runs in the sixth and seventh inning to hand the Bears a 2-1 loss in an American Legion District 22 game; the Bears fell to 16-5 overall, 4-2 in the district while the Hilgards improved to 16-3 overall, 5-0 in District 22.

Bears manager Ken Schaake lamented his team's inability to put together some offense when they needed runs, citing a situation in the top of the second when the Bears had a run in and the bases loaded, but Lanxon fanned Corey Price to get out of the jam. “When we have the bases loaded...out guys have to do something,” Schaake said. “We did not make the adjustments there; we did not take advantage of the opportunities we had – they only had a couple of opportunities against (Coffman) and they took advantage of both of them.

“He (Lanxon) is a good pitcher; he was making some good pitches and they made the plays when they had to, but you can't say it's our offense's fault. I think in situational

times, we should have adjusted and perhaps tried to put the ball in play; we took some hard swings and didn't make the adjustment against him.”

“We never stopped,” said Hilgards manager Johnathan Schweppe. “Both teams hit the ball hard tonight; we were a little more lucky than them, I guess. I think we're starting to swing the bats well – our pitching's been great, and our bats are finally startling to come around. We wanted this win pretty bad.”

The Bears' only run came in the top of the second when Andrew Yancik led off with a walk; with two out, Kade Burns singled to move Yancik over and Tate Wargo singled in Yancik to put the Bears up 1-0; a Konnor Loewen walk loaded up the bases, but Lanxon struck out Price to end the threat and keep it 1-0, which is how it stayed for several innings.

Coffman was cruising along himself, conceding only two hits and had retired the first two Hilgards in the bottom of the sixth when Lanxon stepped to the plate and singled, moving to third when Ty Shylanski doubled to bring up Tyler Brinkmann, who singled in Lanxon to tie the game at 1-1.

“When they came in (after the inning), I had to tell one of my kids – he came out and told them too – he told them, 'guys, we're hitting the ball harder then they are tonight – we're just having a little less luck, so let's keep going with what we're doing,'”

That they did when Connor Jenkins singled to open the inning and Jack Ysursa singled to put runners at first and second. Jenkins and Matt Sisk were erased on force outs, leaving runners at the corners when Jake Frazier came to bat and singled in Ysursa with the winning run.

Price was 1-for-4 for the Bears on the night, Yancik 1-for-1 with a run scored, Kade Burns 1-for-3 and Wargo 1-for-3 with a RBI. Coffman was the hard-luck loser, striking out five for Metro East.

The Bears are at Smithton for a District 22 game at 6 p.m. today, then visit American-National of Hazelwood for a 5:45 p.m. Friday game.

