

McGivney Stays Focused To Sweep Saturday Double-Header

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
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GLEN CARBON – It was a good week to have a good week for the Father McGivney baseball team.

After suffering their only loss to nationally ranked IMG Academy of Bradenton, Florida, an 8-5 setback in the final of the 2024 Perfect Game USA Classic in Memphis, Tennessee's USA Stadium Complex, the Griffins took a week off for the Easter holiday.

On April 1st, it was no joking matter that McGivney was opening up a five-game work week, and it was capped off nicely as the Griffins upended Heyworth 8-0 and 10-0 in a Saturday double-header improving their record to 12-1.

This week, McGivney outscored their opponents a combined 56-6, also in thanks to a 25-4 win over Staunton and a 12-2 scoreline against Gibault.

They then followed those games up with back-to-back shutouts against last year's Class 1A Bloomington Sectional finalists, Heyworth.

While many might roll their eyes at the Saturday scorelines, McGivney head coach Chris Erwin saw the double-header as a unique opportunity to focus on, well, staying focused.

"Yeah, we don't have a whole lot of them," he said, talking about the DH. "It's nice to have them because we know we have to stay focused for a lot longer than just seven innings and that's hard to do, it kind of tests you. I think that it tests the team, and it was good for us to get two wins today."

"Being able to stay focused for a long period of time is tough, especially for high school guys," Erwin continued. "You don't want to get lackadaisical and drop one, or not finish a game. We did a good job in the second game after three, four hours of being here, to finish out the game."

In game one McGivney opened with a single run in the first, three runs each in the third and fourth and one more in the sixth as the game went the distance.

Chase Kelley started on the mound and went the first four innings, striking out seven along the way while allowing the only hit of game one. Dane Keeven, Ryker Keller, and Evan Koontz also pitched a single inning each as the Griffins turned it into a bit of a bullpen game.

David Carrol was given the nod for game two, and he also went four innings. He struck out two and allowed two hits. Keller pitched another inning in relief.

"I was really happy with the pitching," Erwin said. "In a five-game week like this it can get sideways real fast, and it can get sideways on Monday, or Saturday. So, making sure we throw strikes, which is a focus for us all season, whether we play one game a week or five games that week, but it's easier said than done."

"I thought our guys, especially David Carroll, Chase Kelley, the two starters did a great job throwing strikes and putting a lot of pressure on them," Erwin continued. "And then we played good defense. They put the ball in play, and we were able to play good defense which is kind of our M.O."

Game two was shortened after McGivney scored a run in the first, three more in the second, and then walked it off with six more in the fifth to end the game via the 10-run rule.

The Griffins combined for 15 hits on the day.

Omar Avalos combined for three hits and an RBI on the day while Drew Kleinheider had three hits and three RBI. Mason Holmes, Juston Terhaar, Isaac Wendler, and Kannon Kamp all recorded hits.

Holmes, Terhaar, Wendler, and Ben Sink all recorded an RBI as well.

The Griffins head into a four-game week beginning at Piasa Southwestern on Monday and at Althoff on Tuesday. They then host Althoff on Thursday and play at Metro-East Lutheran on Friday. All games begin at 4:30 p.m.