

Kamp Throws Five-Plus Hitless Innings, Griffins Clinch Share Of GMC Title

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
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ALTON – The Father McGivney Griffins set many goals each season.

The first one they can check off is a conference championship, and for the fourth year running, they checked that box.

McGivney clinched at least a share of the Gateway Metro Conference title with newly added Althoff Catholic Thursday afternoon at Gordon Moore Park.

It came after back-to-back wins over Marquette Catholic. After a 3-2 walk-off win in Glen Carbon on Wednesday, the Griffins followed that up with an 8-0 win on Thursday at Lloyd Hopkins Field.

“We’ve got a piece of it. That’s four in a row for us. And that’s always our first goal every year,” McGivney head coach Chris Erwin said after the 8-0 win on Thursday.

“It’s a big deal. I think winning the conference is important. It’s hard to do. Now we’ll just go and take of business to make sure we don’t have to share it.”

To ensure a solo title, McGivney will have to finish out and win its final GMC game against Christ Our Rock Lutheran on May 11, a game rescheduled from April 18. The game was tied in the eighth inning when it was postponed.

Thursday afternoon the Griffins made easy work of the Explorers, who extended their losing streak to seven games.

“The tough thing is, like I told the kids, a couple of weeks ago we had a 3-2 walk off against Collinsville, and then, well, we went into a bit of a funk,” Marquette head coach Tim Fahnestock said. “Last night, the kids came out, they did everything we asked them to do, and same thing, a bit of a funk after we lose that one 3-2.”

The Explorers were once 8-4 on the season after a 16-9, eight-inning win over Metro-East Lutheran on April 11. On April 13, like Fahnestock alluded to, Marquette lost 3-2 in a walk-off at Collinsville. The Explorers haven’t won a game since.

“These guys have got to find a way out of it and to get bright. It’s tough,” Fahnestock said.

When asked if he thought the Gateway Metro Conference was the toughest it’s ever been, he was quick to say yes.

“With Althoff and two with , Metro-East gave us a game, Christ Our Rock was solid. It’s very competitive and it’s going to stay competitive from here on out,” Fahnestock said.

After two scoreless innings, McGivney got things going with three runs in the third, one in the fourth, and four more in the fifth. The Griffins outhit Marquette 8-1.

Getting the start for the Griffins was Kannon Kamp and he shined brighter than he has yet this season.

“That was super special on the mound today,” Erwin said about Kamp. “He was dialed in. That’s the most dialed in I’ve seen him all season. And he’s pitched in a lot of big games this season, but golly, he was dialed in there.”

He threw six innings with nine strikeouts and no walks. For the first five and two-thirds of those innings Kamp was working a no-hitter.

The Griffins made sure to not break the unwritten rule of talking about it, but it was eventually broken up in the sixth by Karson Morrissey's chopper-single to third, a play that Justin Terhaar nearly bare-hand grabbed and slinged to first for the out. His brother Nathan Terhaar made a nice diving catch earlier on in the game to keep the no-no alive.

"Obviously everyone's looking around and thinking about it," Erwin said. "I thought it was pretty special for him."

With the no-hitter broken up, Kamp had no reason to complete the game, so Ryker Keller came out to pitch the seventh, giving up a walk before getting a double-play ball and a strikeout to secure the win.

The Terhaar brothers also had a day at the plate. Justin hit a two-RBI double in the third while Nathan had two hits and an RBI as well. Drew Kleinheider, Wednesday's game-winning run, had a hit and two RBI and Ben Sink, who hit the walk-off single to right, had two hits and an RBI.

"Yesterday was a lot of fun; walk-off fashion," Erwin said. "Those are a lot of fun to be a part of, but today we wanted to make sure and play our game which is obviously aggressive on the bases and making sure we stay in order and hit line drives."

"I thought we did a really good job at the plate, much better than yesterday stringing hits together, being chaotic on the bases and I think that was really good for us," Erwin said.

The Griffins improve to 21-2 on the season and move on toward Sunday's much-anticipated game against the Alton Redbirds at Busch Stadium on Sunday, April 28 at 1 p.m.

The Explorers fall to 8-11 and host the Staunton Bulldogs on Saturday at 10 a.m.