

Calhoun's Baalman throws no-hitter against Tigers, but Edwardsville still wins 4-2

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – Hardin-Calhoun's Grace Baalman has thrown quite a number of no-hitters in her career.

It may be a safe bet that none of them turned out like Monday's no-hitter at Edwardsville did.

Baalman tossed a no-hitter at the Tigers Monday evening at the District 7 sports complex – and wound up on the losing end of a 4-2 decision.

“We'll take it,” Tiger coach Lori Blade said. “I feel for Grace, but I've been on the other end of this where we've had a pitcher losing a double no-hitter; it's a tough way to take the loss. We executed a little bit better by putting (the ball) in play and getting bunts down and took advantage of some situations that they gave us to get some runs across when we couldn't get the hits.”

The Tigers scored three times in the bottom of the fourth to take the lead on the Warriors thanks to some mistakes on the Warrior side. “We executed it really well,” Blade said of taking advantage of the miscues, “and were able to get those runs across.”

The big key, though, may have been the Tigers getting a run of their own in answer to a two-run second inning by Calhoun. “To respond after they got two was probably what I thought was important for us,” Blade said. “Jordyn (Henricks) threw a really good game; she gave up a few hits, but for the most part, she did what she had to in key situations.”

“When you play a team like Edwardsville,” said Warrior coach Matt Baalman, “they're going to put the ball in play and challenge you; all of our losses have been pretty much the same result of what you saw tonight. We're working on it, working on it every day and we've only got eight more games to work on it.

“We haven't had a lot of practice time the last couple of weeks because of playing a lot; still, I expect more out of the girls. Some girls are giving me 100 percent, I have a few girls who will be there at the end; this game really helped us – that may have helped open some of the eyes on the team, Grace can't carry us by herself.”

Calhoun's two runs came in the top of the second when Sophie Lorton reached base on a dropped third strike and was sacrificed to second by Ashleigh Presley before Kyleigh Presley reached on a walk to put runners at first and second; they moved to second and third when Junie Zirkelbach reached on an error to load the bases, and Grace Baalman drove home Lorton and Kyleigh Presley on a double to put the Warriors on top.

Edwardsville's response came quickly when Maria Smith was hit by a Grace Baalman pitch and went to second on a walk to Lauren Taplin; Smith moved to third on a wild pitch and came home when Lauren Taplin grounded to Grace Baalman to halve the lead at 2-1.

Then came the fourth; Smith reached on an one-out walk and stole second before going to third on a wild pitch. Taplin herself walked and stole second before Taryn Brown came up. She grounded to Grace Baalman who saw Smith had drifted too far away from base. Baalman threw to third to try to get the out, but the ball got away and allowed Smith and Taplin to score, with wild pitches eventually bringing Brown to score.

Henricks took over from there, retiring the side the rest of the way while giving up only a double to Lorton and a single to Holly Baalman to preserve the win. Grace Baalman

wound up going 2-for-3 with the double and getting two RBIs; Lorton was 1-for-3 with the double and run scored while Lorton and Zirkelbach had the other Warrior hits on the day.

Henricks got the win, striking out seven, while Grace Baalman took the loss, fanning eight. Next up for the Tigers is a 4:15 p.m. home game against East St. Louis today and a 4:30 p.m. visit to Collinsville Thursday. For the Warriors, a Tuesday-Thursday WIVC home-and-home against Carrollton is next, at home Tuesday and at Carrollton Thursday; game times are both at 4:30 p.m.

