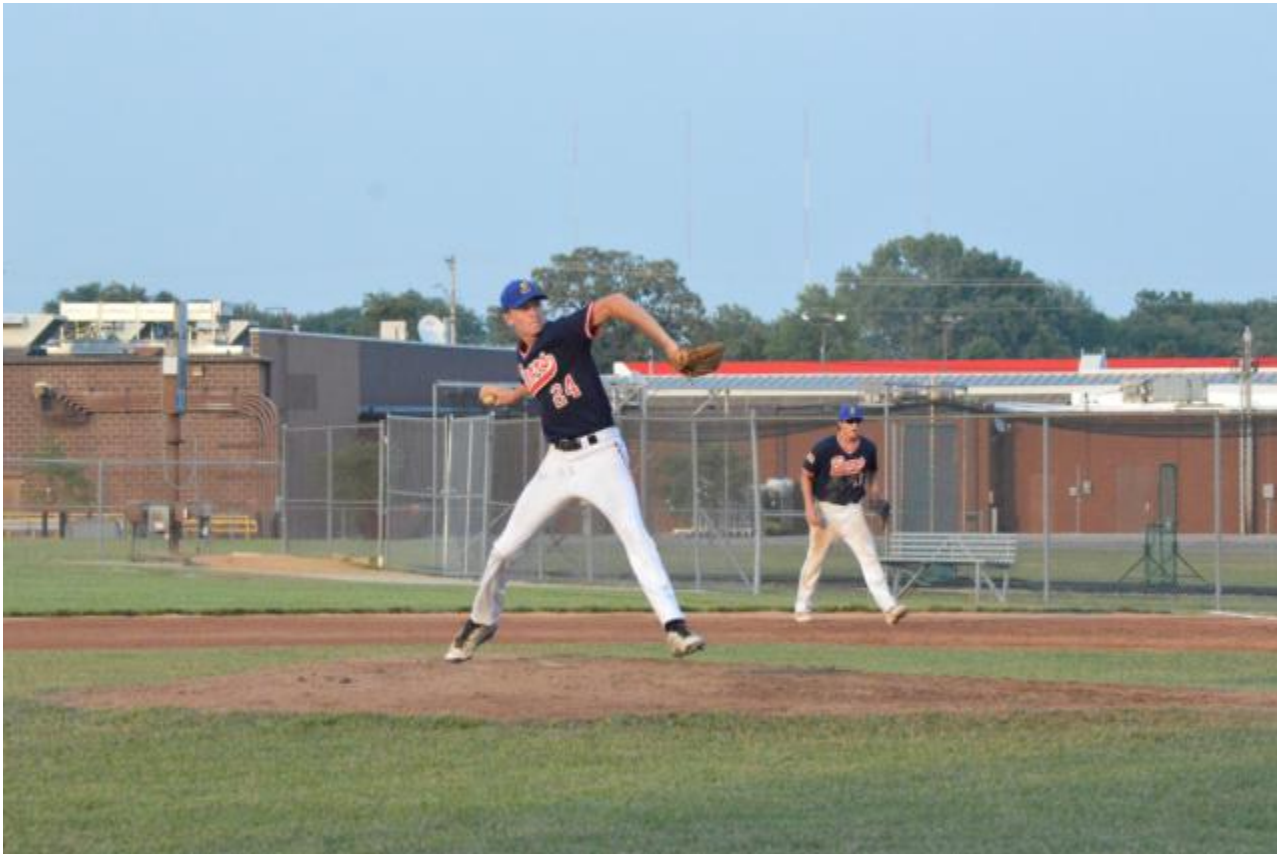


Frank's pitching, Price's hitting help send Bears to division final

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
July 20 2017 10:10 AM



HIGHLAND – Andrew Frank and Corey Price played key roles in the Metro East Bears' 8-3 win Wednesday night over Highland in a winner's bracket game in the Illinois American Legion Fifth Division tournament at Glik Park/Optimist Field.

Frank struck out nine and gave up four hits while holding Highland at bay until the seventh, when they scored three times before coming out of the game because of Legion pitch count rules. Price was 2-for-4 with three RBIs and a run scored, including a two-run triple that was a big blow in a five-run first inning for the Bears.

“Coach (Ken Schaake) was calling pitches and we were trying to keep them off-balance,” Frank said of his effort on the mound, “mixing fastball in and slider away, and if they touch that, go back inside with fastballs and throw another slider; just kind of mix it up and keep them on their toes.”

That the Bears got five runs in the bottom of the first for Frank was a big boost for Frank. “It's always good when your guys get you five runs,” Frank said. “You can sit back and relax and just think all of this is no problem, just go back and do what you do.

“Everybody wants to try to get a shutout, but I did what was best for the team by coming out – it was no problem.”

Getting the five runs “helps out a lot obviously for the pitcher and the players in the field,” Price said of the five-run explosion in the first. “I was feeling great, but I think the pitchers got behind in a lot of counts with me, and I did get to look for a pitch I wanted to hit.

“The pitch selection – even before he (Highland's Jake Ramsey) went out there, that was our first priority with us because we can hit the ball and hit the pitches we really want to hit; we've just got to look for those a lot more.”

Having Thursday off after defeating Highland while awaiting whoever emerges from Thursday's loser's bracket games Friday afternoon is a huge advantage for the Bears, Price feels. “That's huge,” Price said. “The pitch count and pitching and everything, it being 100 degrees out - I'm worn out after three days of playing in this heat, so having a day off is really going to be huge.”

“It definitely helps out,” Frank said of having Thursday off, “because whatever team does make it won't have any pitching, so we're going to be sitting pretty, and we have three pitchers who haven't even thrown yet in this tournament and we still have Tate (Wargo), who threw just threw five pitches; we've got four good pitchers who are ready to go.”

