

Six-run eighth helps advance Bears past Danville in regional

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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HOLLAND, Ohio – For the second day in a row, the Metro East Bears faced a familiar opponent in the American Legion Great Lakes Regional baseball tournament Thursday afternoon.

This time it was Danville who the Bears took on in a winner's bracket game of the tournament, a team the Bears had faced several times previously this season.

This time, the Bears jumped out to a 4-0 lead on Danville through four innings before Danville pulled to 5-4 through seven innings, but an six-run eighth inning gave Metro East enough breathing room to send Danville to the loser's bracket in an 11-8 win at Mercy Field to move into a Friday evening winner's bracket match against Midland, Mich., about a half-hour following today's 3 p.m. elimination game between Rockport, Ind., and Eau Claire, Wis. The winner of that game moves into a Saturday evening semifinal game

The Bears got out to the lead in the top of the second when Corey Price stroked a one-out single and went to second on a Steven Pattan sacrifice; Tate Wargo then stepped up and singled to score Price, with an error allowing Pattan to score. Andrew Yancik then stepped to the plate and singled in Wargo to make it 3-0 in Metro East's favor. The Bears then upped the lead to 4-0 in the fourth, starting when Will Messer reached on an error and was sacrificed to second by Yancik. A Dylan Burris single sent Messer to third and Kade Burns hit a sacrifice fly to center to bring home Messer.

Danville cut the lead to 5-2 in the fifth before a Bear run in the seventh made it 5-2 when Pattan singled home Blake Vandiver; Danville pulled to 5-4 with two runs of their own in the seventh before the Bears came up in the top of the eighth, starting when Burns was hit by a pitch with one out and stole second; Joel Quirin then stepped up and singled to center to bring home Burns and make it 6-4. Vandiver then bunt-singled Quirin over the second before Price singled in Quirin before being thrown out at second when a throw to catch Quirin didn't work, with Vandiver moving to third.

Pattan managed to coax a walk out of Danville to put runners on the corners before stealing second and Wargo managed to draw a walk to load the bases; Messer then singled in Vandiver and Pattan to increase the lead to 9-4, with Wargo moving to third. A botched pickoff try on Messer got away to allow Wargo to score and Messer to move to second; Zach Seavers walked to put runners at first and second before Burris reached on a sacrifice bunt attempt to allow Messer to score to put the Bears up 11-4.

Danville then rallied with four of their own in the eighth when Noah Nelson doubled home Austin Littleton and Devonte Hicks to cut the Bear lead to 11-6; an Ernest Plummer grounder allowed Dylan Dodd to score and pull Danville to 11-7 and a Thomas Savage single brought Noah Nelson in to make it 11-8, but Danville was shut down by Issac Garrett in relief to preserve the win.

Burns got the win for the Bears to up them to 42-8 on the summer, going 6.2 innings and throwing 124 pitches while conceding four runs (three earned) on 11 hits and one strikeout on the day; Garrett got the save, going 1.1 innings on 15 pitches and conceded no hits or runs; Seavers stepped in for Burns in the seventh, going an inning and conceding four runs (three earned) on five hits while dismissing one by strikeout.

Burris had a 4-for-6 day at the plate for the Bears with a RBI, while Burns had a RBI and run scored; Quirin went 1-for-6 with a RBI and run scored, Vandiver 4-for-6 with two runs scored, Price 4-for-5 with a RBI and run scored, Pattan 2-for-4 with a RBI and two runs scored, Wargo 2-for-4 with two runs scored, Messer 1-for-5 with two RBIs and two runs scored and Yancik 1-for-3 with a RBI.

This evening's game will be displayed in real time by logging on to americanlegion.sportingin.com/region5; fans can also keep track of the day's other games in the tournament and other Legion regional tournaments by logging on to the web site.