



# **Carrollton holds on for 6-3 victory over Carlinville**

by John Hough, Sports Writer  
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CARLINVILLE - Two days after blowing an 8-run seventh inning lead in their opening game, the Carrollton Hawks have bounced back with an 8-4 victory over Bunker Hill and then battled the Carlinville Cavies.

The Hawks never trailed and won 6-3 in Carlinville on Thursday afternoon.

Blake Struble picked up the win. He pitched 3.2 innings allowing four hits, two runs while striking out one and walking two.

“It was alright. I wasn’t throwing pitches too well,” Struble said. “I was leaving everything up, but I’m happy it’s a good start to the year. We’re playing better defense. We’re all hitting the ball well.”

Kolten Bottom reached base three times and went 1-for-2 with two RBI. He played at third base for the whole game but was called on to record the final out with the tying run at the plate for Carlinville. On Tuesday he allowed five earned runs and didn’t get anybody out, but this time he only faced one batter and got him out on a comebacker to end the game.

“It was in the back of my mind, but I wanted to get back out there and get an out. I got up 0-2, but then got down 3-2 so I had to kinda lob that last pitch in there and hope for the best. Luckily it got back to me,” Bottom said. “I felt good today. I the ball well.”

“I’m proud of him because he had that disaster the other night and I put him in the same situation,” Carrollton head coach Jeff Krumwiede said. “He was relishing and had the right mental approach when I told him.”

Carrollton got on the board in the top of the first inning.

With the bases loaded, Tyler Barnett hit a weak grounder and beat out the throw to first base by Carlinville pitcher Kyle Dixon.

The Cavies put two men on base with two outs in the first two innings, but the Hawks escaped both rallies, including Gabe Jones making a sliding catch in right field.

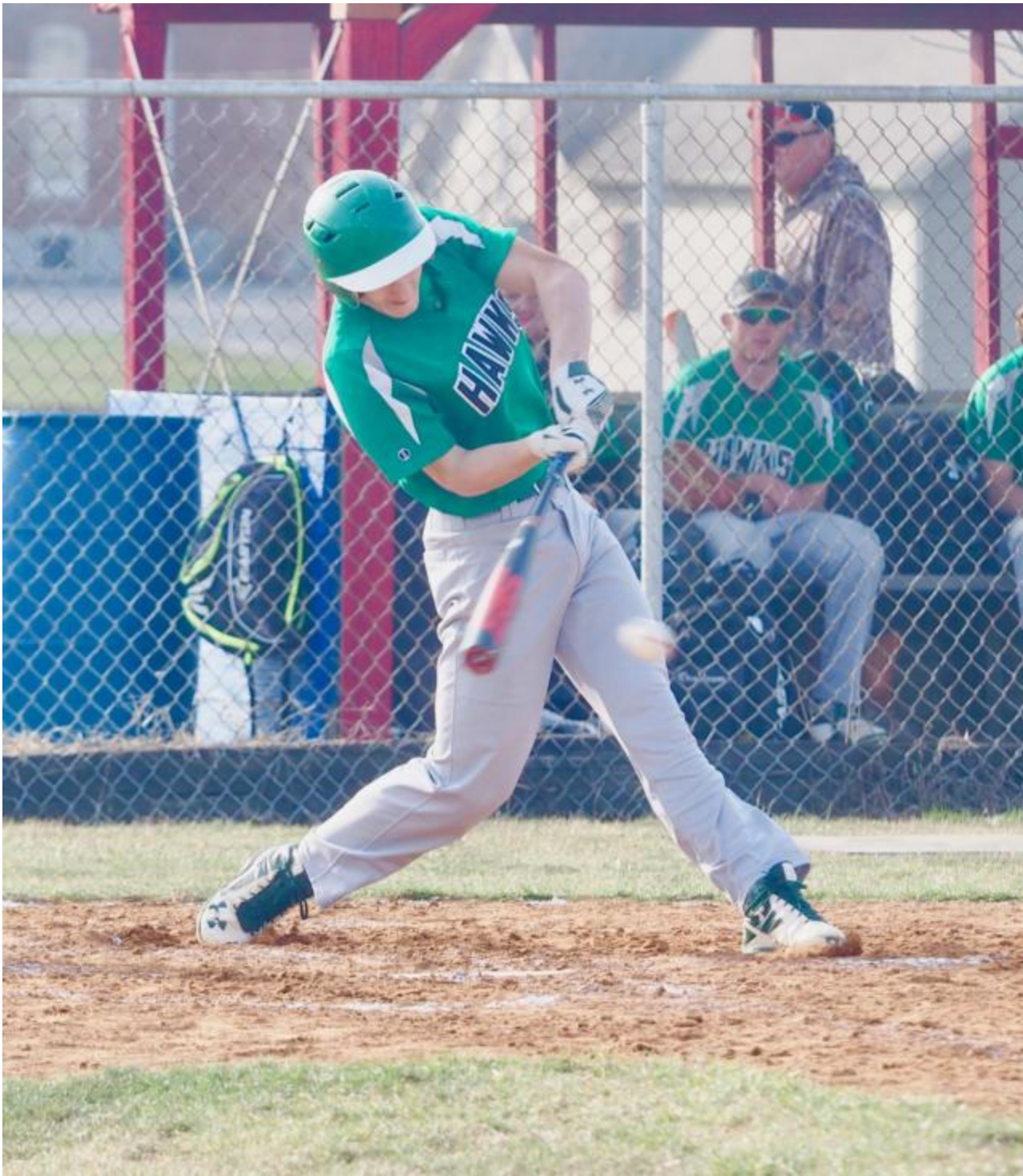
As a team, Carlinville committed five errors, and Carrollton capitalized off of a couple of infield mistakes in the top of the third. Bottom crossed home plate then a throwing error went out of play and allowed Hayden Stringer to score.

The Hawks led 3-0, but the Cavies responded with a two-run home run by Jake Ambuel. He ended up going 3-for-4 on the day.

In the following inning, Carrollton erased Carlinville's two-run response.

Alex Bowker led off with a single, Kyle Waters bunted him over to second, and Nathan Walker lined an RBI triple just over the outstretched glove of the centerfielder. Next up was Bottom and he drove in Walker with an RBI double to make it 5-2.





The Hawks got six hits with 13 batters reaching base off of Dixon who lasted four innings.

The Cavies cut the deficit to 5-3 as Ambuel scored on a wild pitch, but yet again the Hawks answered back in the ensuing inning. Bowker got on base, worked his way to third base and scored on a sacrifice fly from Bottom.

In the bottom of the sixth, Carlinville had a great opportunity to tie or take the lead as Ambuel came up with the bases loaded with two outs. Walker was on the mound after taking over for Struble with two outs in the fourth inning. He walked all three of the runners on base, managed to get Ambuel to fly out into deep right field.

As a team, the Cavies stranded 11 baserunners.

“had some good hitters and always had a person on base it seemed like,” Bottom said. “Blake and Nathan did a great job of getting out of those jams. defense made good plays also.”

“The big thing for us is going to be to continue to get our pitching staff to focus on strike one,” Carrollton head coach Jeff Krumwiede said. “We had a bunch of walks again, and it was our bugaboo last year. We gotta fix it.”

At 4:30 PM today Carrollton is scheduled to play Brussels at Brussels High School to conclude their four-game opening week.

