



Hawks make improbable comeback to beat Brown County in extra innings

by John Hough, Sports Writer
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CARROLLTON - It was a pitcher's duel through five innings, but the Brown County Hornets broke through with two runs in the top of the sixth inning and three more in the seventh to make the score 5-0.

The Carrollton Hawks needed five runs with three outs, and despite the odds, they got them to force the game into extra innings. In the bottom of the ninth with two outs, Gabe Jones hit a triple into right-center, and on a 1-2 pitch to Ethan Brannan, he scored on a past ball.

The Hawks completed an improbable comeback to beat the Hornets 6-5 and remain unbeaten at 5-0-1. Brown County falls to 1-2 on the season.

“We definitely did not want to get another tie and blow it again like we did last time,” Bowker said.

It’s all ironic because nine days before, the Hawks blew a 9-1 seventh-inning lead and as a result, they tied the Triopia Trojans 9-9.

“We learned a lesson that you’re never out of it,” Carrollton coach Jeff Krumwiede said. “We were down after giving up all those runs and gave some runs away quite honestly. We told the boys to take a strike, and had trouble throwing strikes. We got a chance.”

Alex Bowker threw one of the best games of his career, but he would ultimately take a no-decision. He pitched five innings giving up one hit and struck out ten batters while walking none. Bowker allowed three base runners through the five innings he pitched, and the Hawks were hardly in any danger allowing runs.

“I don’t really care . It’s just nice to get a comeback win. It’s pretty magical,” Alex Bowker said.

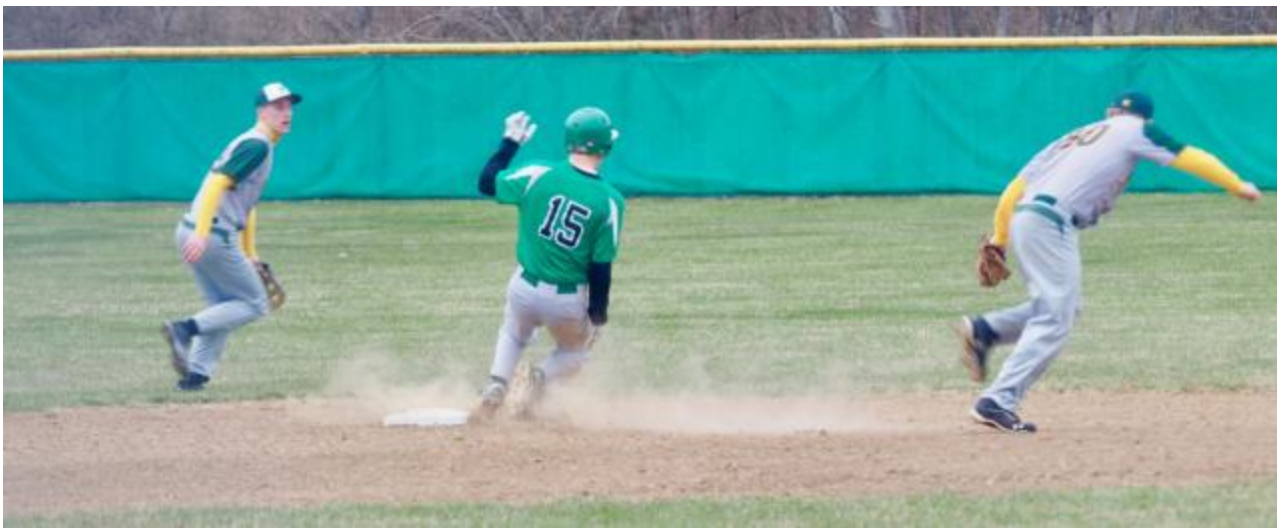
Joe Hendricker was no slouch either.

He wasn’t as dominating as Bowker, but the results were the same. Hendricker gave up three hits, and no runs while striking out four and walking one.

Nathan Walker came on in relief for Bowker in the top of the sixth inning. With two outs and a man at second base, Darian Drake roped a high fly ball to the warning track that was just out of reach of right fielder Gabe Jones. The RBI triple broke the deadlock, and Hendricker added an insurance run with an RBI infield single.

The Hawks nearly responded in the bottom of the sixth as they loaded the bases with two outs, but a ground ball to the shortstop ended the inning.

Brown County scored three more runs in the following inning due to an outfield error, a bases-loaded walk, and another RBI hit by Drake.



The Hornets needed three outs with sophomore Nathan Hendricker on the mound, but had a difficult time finding the strike zone and Carrollton's batters pounced on that. Brannan, Bowker and Kyle Waters started the comeback by drawing consecutive walks to load the bases. Walker drove in Brannan on a force play at second base, but Bottom laced a single past the second baseman that scored Bowker to make it 5-2.

Catcher Hayden Stringer joined the hitting parade as he knocked an RBI single to left field that made it a 5-3 game. He went 2-for-5 at the plate.

After a strikeout to Tyler Barnett, the Hawks were down to their last out with runners on the corners and Blake Struble up to bat. Stringer stole second base and moments later Struble lined a single up the middle that scored Bottom and Stringer to tie the game at five apiece.

"You go up there and just try to stay within yourself. I went up there with a mindset that I'm not gonna end this game here," Struble said. "If he was gonna throw me anything I'm going to hit it as far as I can."

"We had so many base runners and opportunities for our guys to come through," Krumwiede said. "When came up I asked him have you been up with runners in scoring position? He said no, and I said that's good. Here's your chance. He took advantage, and I tip my cap to him for coming through with that big hit."

The Hawks had all the momentum in the bottom of the eight and got the bases loaded again with one out, but for the second time, they failed to push across a run.

Tyler Barnett did a splendid job in relief and pitched shutout baseball in the extra innings earning him his first victory of the season.

Carrollton got eight hits overall but managed ten walks with nine of them coming in the sixth inning and later.

“You wanna score early in the game, but coming from behind is fun,” Struble said. “I love that last inning we’re not gonna lose the attitude, and that’s how we should play every game. It feels great.”

The Hawks will host the Roxana Shells today at 4:30 p.m.

