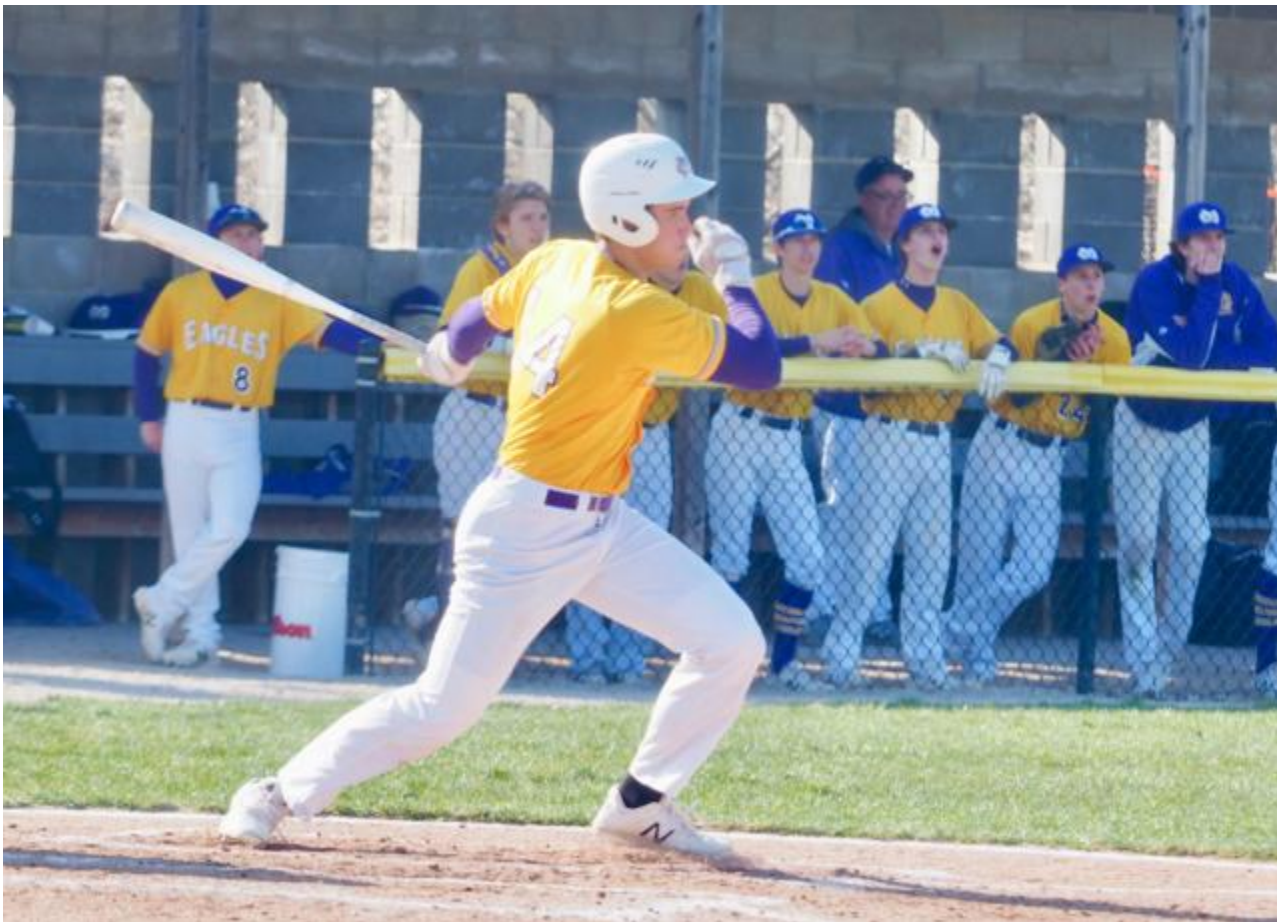


# Eagles fight back to defeat Explorers in high-scoring non-conference game

by John Hough, Sports Writer  
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BETHALTO - Playing from behind for most of the game, the Civic Memorial Eagles needed another run to tie the game in the bottom of the seventh inning.

They got what they needed and more so.

A four-run sixth inning by the Eagles propelled them to a 10-7 baseball victory over the Marquette Catholic Explorers on Tuesday afternoon at Bethalto Sports Complex.

“Our at-bats got better as the game went on. We were kinda locked in,” Eagles coach Nick Smith said. “We put the ball in play forcing to make plays and take advantage of opportunities we get. We did a nice job of fighting back and getting the crooked number late.”

Nick Walker led the way for the Eagles going 3-for-4 with three RBI. Geoff Withers went 2-for-3 with two RBI doubles and two runs scored. Bryce Zupan also collected two hits and scored three times.

Kaleb Ware and Ethan Kopsie each went 2-for-4 at the plate for the Explorers.

Despite the loss, Marquette coach Tim Fahnestock was happy with his team’s resiliency they showed for most of the game by taking the lead back whenever Civic Memorial tied things up or threatened to take the lead.

“It showed a lot of character. I’m very proud of these boys the way they fought because all year long we’ve gotten out on teams early and then we stopped,” Marquette coach Tim Fahnestock said.

The Explorers got out to a 2-0 lead in the first inning and expanded it to 3-0 in the top half of the second. Civic Memorial would get two back in the bottom of the second and tie the game at three apiece in the third.

Marquette would add two more runs in the fourth, and both teams traded a run apiece in the next half innings. Trailing 6-4 in the bottom of the fifth, Civic Memorial put together a rally and tie the game once again.

Kyle Begnel lasted five innings striking out five and walking two. The Eagles got nine hits and six runs off him.

Garrett Weiner restored the Explorers lead with an RBI double in the top of the sixth to make it 7-6.

Luke Simmons entered the game in the top of the sixth inning in top form, but the Eagles lineup got to him with four runs, three hits, one error, one walk, and a hit-batter. Simmons' record is now 4-1 with an E.R.A. of 0.96.

Zach Vaughn relieved Adam Flack in the third inning pitched three full innings giving up three runs on four hits and striking out five for Civic Memorial. Chandler Powell earned his first victory of the season and his brother, Spencer shut the door in the top of the seventh and got the save.

“We had to use multiple pitchers, but some guys stepped up,” Smith said. “We used a lot of our bench, and some guys stepped up in some key spots whether it was a good read on the bases or a defensive play. I thought everyone contributed and that’s big.”

“Our defense needs to come along, but our offense has been great. I think our hitting is better because we’ve been inside so much taking so many reps,” Fahnstock said laughing. “It’s kinda like a double-edged sword, but we have been hitting the ball a lot better. We’re getting more reps in hitting and less at fielding, so hopefully, they’ll balance out, and it’ll all start clicking.”

Civic Memorial now go to 9-2 and will take on the undefeated Mascoutah Indians (9-0) today. It’s so far been a successful start to the week with a 4-3 win over Triad on Monday. They look to go 2-0 in the Mississippi Valley Conference as the Eagles try to defend the conference title.

“Monday was a big win and tomorrow is a big game down in Mascoutah,” Smith said. “Every game in our conference is going to be tough. We look forward to that though. We embrace the role of defending conference champion, and we want to do everything we can to keep it here.”

















