

# Pitcher Kolten Bottom is nearly perfect in Hawks victory over Calhoun

by John Hough, Sports Writer  
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CARROLLTON - Kolten Bottom was a strike away from one more out.

Nineteen Calhoun Warrior batters had come up to the plate, and none had gotten on base. The Carrollton senior right-hander was two outs away from achieving a perfect game and had a 1-2 count on Jonny Laing.

However, the junior waited on a fastball and roped it into the left-field gap and got a double breaking up the perfect game and no-hitter. Cory Nelson then ended the shutout as he knocked an RBI double to left field.

Bottom had to settle for a near-perfect, splendid complete game as the Carrollton Hawks defeated Calhoun 6-1 in Carrollton on Tuesday.

He struck out nine batters, walked nobody and had a solid defensive cast around him.

“I was hitting my spots. I was getting the outside corner, but I was hanging my curveball a little bit there at the beginning,” Bottom said. “They kept hitting it right to our defense, and they made amazing plays. It was great.”

Coming off a no-hitter in five innings against North Greene, Bottom has been on fine form the past week, and he was feeding off of it since.

“He’s really stepped up. He’s throwing first-pitch strike one, and you build everything after that. He flirted with two no-hitters.” Carrollton coach Jeff Krumwiede said. “He was executing all three pitches, but the big thing is getting ahead and hoping your defense makes the plays.”

The first batter of the game for Calhoun was Ty Bick, and he laced a line drive to right field, but Gabe Jones was in a position to make the catch. Perhaps the most Bottom asked of his defense was a ground ball hit up the middle that shortstop Alex Bowker dived for and threw out the hitter by a step to first base. A couple of other line drives were hit, but right at fielders.

“It wasn’t just me; my defense had my back the whole game. I can’t say enough about them. making amazing plays,” Bottom said. “At least we got the win. That’s all I really wanted. The perfect game a cherry on top.”

Bottom was very close to being perfect on the mound, but Nathan Walker was perfect at the plate.

He went 4-for-4 with four RBI and a two-run inside the park home run in the first inning that gave the Hawks a 2-0 lead. Walker's batting average is just under .600. and fresh off an all-state season a year ago, he hasn't let up.

"He's having an unbelievable year, and it would've been easy for him after that all-state selection to have a junior let down, but he's not doing it," Krumwiede said. "He's been consistent all year long. He's got good hitters behind him to protect him."



Sophomore Garrett Settles finished 2-for-3 while Hayden Stringer and Tyler Barnett each bagged RBI doubles.

Carrollton made it 5-0 in the second by scoring two runs in a two-out rally.

Calhoun's Blake Baalman settled in the rest of the way allowing one run and four hits in the next four innings. Overall he struck out five batters and walked one.

The Hawks improve to 13-4-1 while Calhoun drops to 9-11. The two teams will meet up tomorrow afternoon in Hardin to decide who claims the WIVC South conference title. If the Hawks win then, they'll claim it, and if the Warriors are victorious, then both will split the title.

“Putting the pitching, defense, and the hitting together has been our problem, and we did it today. I’m excited for the boys,” Krumwiede said. “We got another job on Thursday. They’ll have Sievers ready to go, and it’ll be tough at their place.”

It’s nearing the midway point of the season, and Carrollton has had an up and down campaign thus far. Krumwiede and company are confident that a tide is turning with back-to-back wins over two quality opponents will give them a boost not to mention an uptick in focus for the six seniors.

“We’ve seen this roller coaster ride all year where we have games like this, and then we don’t. The weather’s nice. That’s gonna be one of the things that are going to be a positive,” Krumwiede said. “We’ve got six seniors. Every single day that goes by you get one day closer to the end, and I think your focus picks up a bit. This team’s all about those seniors and their leadership and how much focus they have and what they want.”



















