



Rodgers Strikes Out 11, Sutberry, Smith, Drive In Two Runs Each As Griffins Defeat Tigers To Reach Final 8

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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GLEN CARBON - Pitcher Jackson Rodgers fanned two batters with runners on second and third with one out, going on to fan 11 in the game, while A.J. Sutberry and Gabe Smith each had two hits and two RBIs as Father McGivney Catholic defeated Greenfield Northwestern 13-0 to win the IHSA Class 1A baseball sectional in the final Friday afternoon at Griffins Field.

It's the first sectional title in the program's short history, and the win also puts the Griffins in the last eight and into their first-ever super-sectional game.

"It's such a great feeling," said McGivney head coach Chris Erwin. "These boys have worked so hard, the coaches have worked so hard to get to this point."

It wasn't easy, as the Tigers came into the game 22-1 and ranked sixth in the state, also looking for their first sectional title. The Griffins were clicking on all cylinders in the game, scoring seven times in the first, twice in the second and four more in the third in going on to the win, the game being terminated because of the 10-run rule.

"I think everything just clicked for us today," Erwin said. "We really kind of spread the hitting around, everyone had a hit tonight, and several had two hits."

Once Rodgers overcame the excitement of starting the game, he pitched very well and stymied the Northwestern batsmen.

"Jackson threw very well today," Erwin said. "He was a little excited in the first, but settled in very nicely."

It was another great team win for the Griffins in continuing their incredible season.

"It really was," Erwin said. "It's been typical of the way we've played all year. We're just excited for the opportunity to make it to the state finals."

Besides Sutberry and Smith's days at the plate, Drew Sowerwine had two hits and an RBI, Luke Deakos had a hit and drove in a pair of runs, Daniel Gierer and Rodgers each had a hit and RBI, Matthew Gierer and Jacob McKee each had a hit and Austin Callovini drove in a run.

Rodgers scattered three Tigers hits in his 11 strikeout performance on the mound.

While Northwestern ends its season 22-2, the Griffins are now 28-6 and will play and advance to Monday's super-sectional at Lincoln Land Community College in Springfield, where they'll face Camp Point Central, who defeated Havana 3-1 in their sectional final, looking to get to the last four for the first time in school history. The game is set to start at 6 p.m.

"Oh, gosh, I think everything we've done so far has been great for the school," Erwin said with a laugh. "That's exactly what we want to do - keep making history."

A win in Monday's super-sectional will put the Griffins into the state finals at Duffy Bass Field on the campus of Illinois State University in Bloomington-Normal, where the Griffins would play the winner of the Rockford Rivets Stadium super-sectional, either Sterling Newman Central Catholic or Newark, in the first semifinal next Thursday morning at 10 a.m. The third-place game is set for 4 p.m., and the final starts at 7 p.m.

[Dan Brannan also contributed to this story.](#)