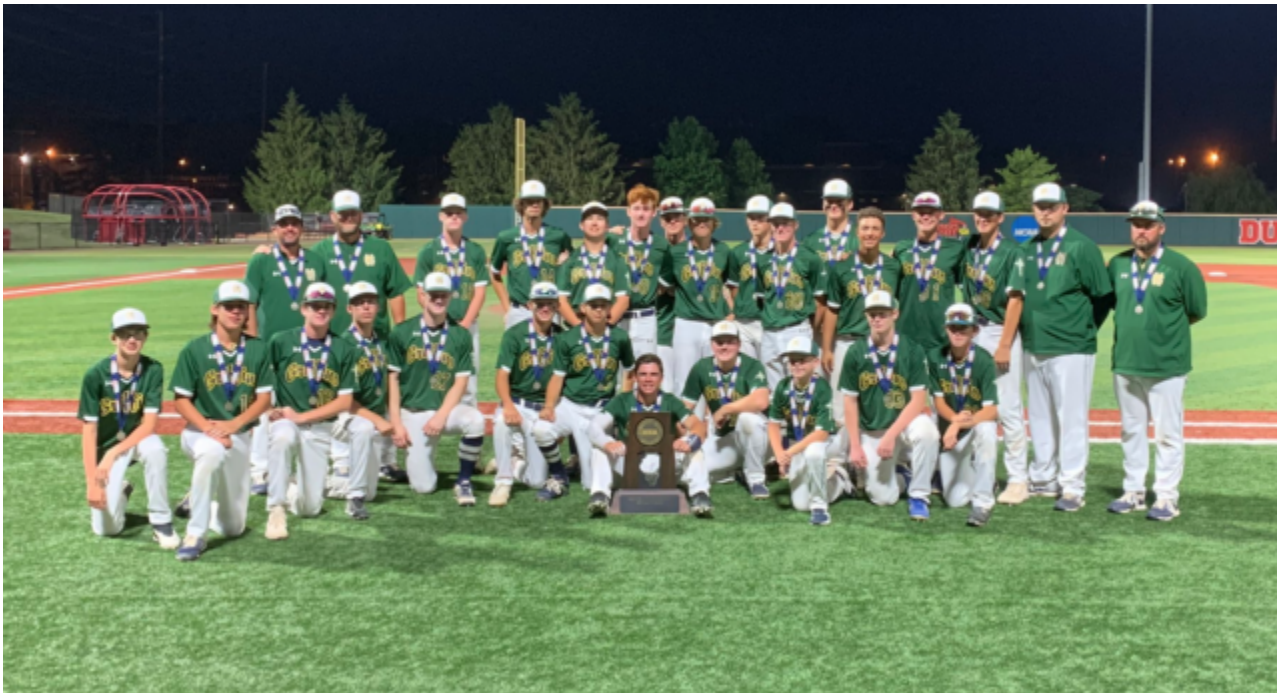


Griffins End Historic Season With Second-Place Finish In IHSA Class 1A State Baseball Tourney, Fall To Farina 4-2

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
June 18 2021 6:01 AM



BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL - The Father McGivney Catholic baseball team saw its historic second season fall just short of the IHSA Class 1A state championship as the Griffins lost the final to Farina South Central 4-2 Thursday evening at Duffy Bass Field on the campus of Illinois State University in Bloomington-Normal.

Earlier in the day, the Griffins came from behind to defeat Newark 5-1 to advance to the final, marking the school's first appearance in an IHSA championship game in any sport as McGivney finished the season 31-7.

The final started as a pitchers duel between Daniel Gierer of McGivney and Spencer Johannes of South Central. Johannes struck out five of the first six batters he faced, while Gierer got out of a first-inning jam with runners on first and second by getting a pair of fly outs. The Griffins had a chance to take the lead in the third when Luke Deakos led off the inning with a hit, then went to second on a wild pitch. Nathan Terhaar, who played a key role in the semifinal after an injury to Jacob McKee, bunted back to the mound for the first out, with Deakos holding. A pop-out and a strikeout ended the inning with the game still scoreless.

The Cougars went ahead in the bottom of the frame when, with one out, Chase Thompson singled, stole second and scored on a double off the left-field fence by Chase Dodson to give South Central a 1-0 lead. Aiden Dodson flew to center and Sebastian Cowger lined to short, where Matthew Gierer made a brilliant running catch to end the inning.

McGivney tied the game in the top of the fifth on a leadoff walk to Jackson Rodgers, who went to second on a sacrifice by Deakos and scored on Terhaar's single up the middle to tie the game at 1-1. Matthew Gierer singled Terhaar to second one out later, but a strikeout ended the inning.

The Cougars took the lead for good in the bottom of the inning, starting with a one-out bunt single by Brandt Hiestand. Thompson then doubled down the left-field line into the corner to score Hiestand and give South Central a 2-1 lead. walks to both Chase and Aiden Dodson loaded the bases, and Cowger reached on an error by the second baseman to score Thompson and keep the bases loaded. Beau Joliff then hit a hard grounder down the first baseline that Gabe Smith made a great play on to hold Joliff to a single that scored Chase Dodson and make it 4-1, but the play saved two other runs from scoring. A strikeout and force play at second ended the inning.

The Griffins rallied in the seventh, starting with Deakos and Terhaar drawing walks and a pinch-hit single by McKee loading the bases with none out. Chase Dodson, who had pitched well in South Central's semifinal win over Mt. Pulaski, came in to pitch and got Matthew Gierer to hit into a double play, scoring Deakos to make it 4-2, and after a walk to Austin Callovini, Smith hit into a force play at second to give the Cougars the state championship 4-2.

Terhaar had a hit and the only RBI for the Griffins, while Matthew Gierer, Drew Sowerwine, Daniel Gierer, Deakos and McKee had the other hits. while Daniel Gierer pitched six solid innings for McGivney, allowing four runs on six hits, walking two, and striking out two. Smith retired the side in order in the seventh.

Thompson led the Cougars with three hits and an RBI, while both Chase Dodson and Joliff had a hit and RBI, Hiestand had a hit and Cowger also had an RBI. Johannes threw six-plus innings, allowing two runs on six hits while walking three and fanning nine, while Chase Dodson allowed only a walk to get the save for South Central.

In the semifinal against Newark, Terhaar, a freshman, came in after McKee was taken out due to an ankle injury after the second pitch of the game, and had two hits and a big RBI in a three-run fifth for the Griffins put them through to the final. Matthew Gierer also had two hits and an RBI, while Sowerwine had two hits, Smith had a hit, and RBI and Callovini also had a hit.

Rodgers went all the way on the mound for McGivney, allowing only a first-inning run to the Norsemen while scattering five hits and striking out seven.

South Central finished its season 26-3 in winning the championship, having advanced to the final with an 11-5 win over Mt. Pulaski in the second semifinal. Newark won the third and fourth place playoff game over the Hilltoppers 6-4.