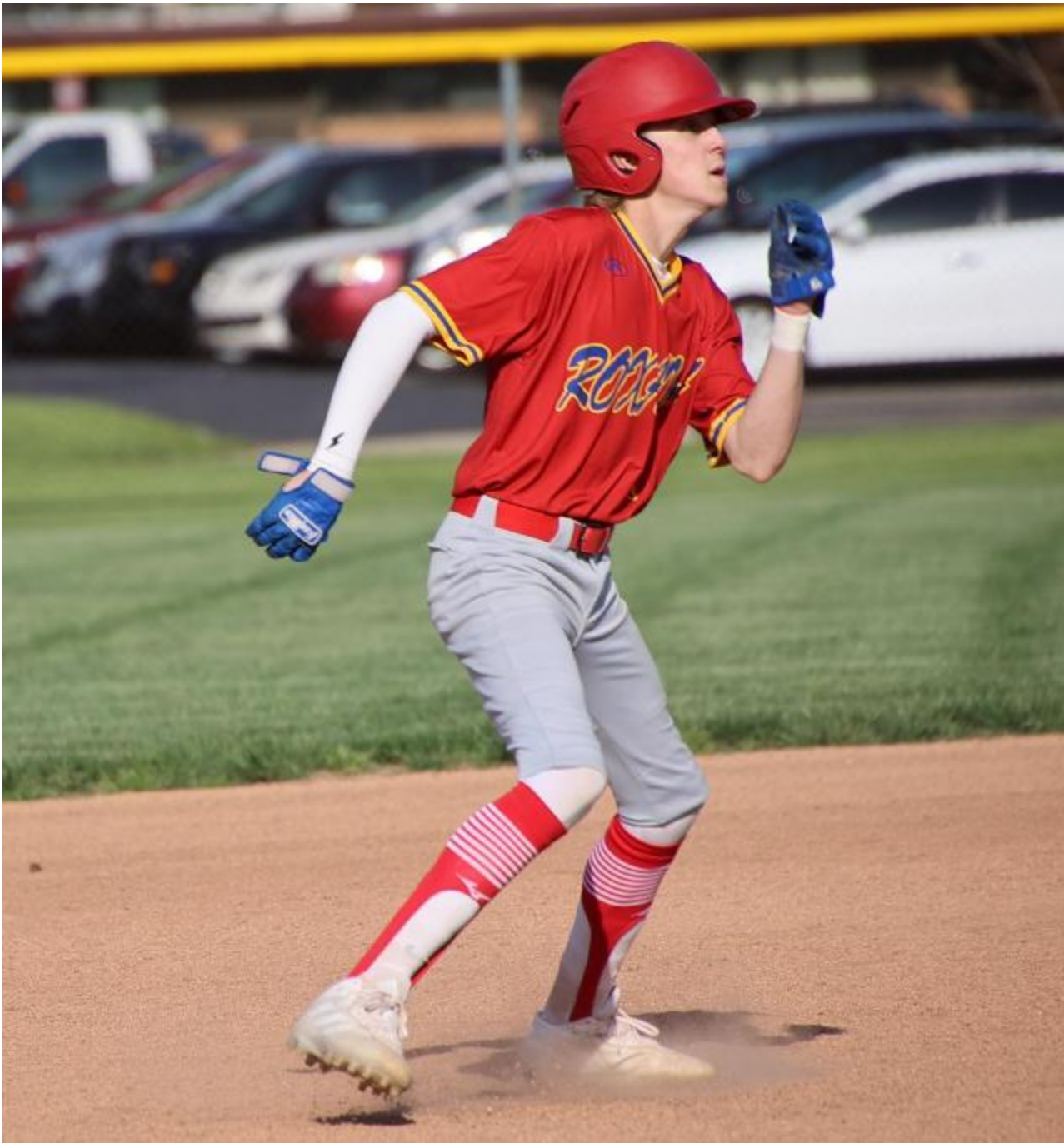


First Inning Grand Slam Powers Explorers Past Roxana

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
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ROXANA – The Marquette Catholic High School baseball team picked up a 7-3 win over the Roxana Shells Wednesday night. With the win, the Explorers improve to 17-8 while it was Roxana’s seventh straight loss as they find themselves 7-16 on the season after a grueling schedule.

Marquette picked up the win even though head coach Tim Fahnestock thought they came out a little nonchalant. “Usually Marquette-Roxana is a good rivalry game and we’re up for it, but it was a little flat today,” he said.

Regardless of what coach thought beforehand, his team proved him that they came ready to play.

Marquette had the bases loaded with one out in the top of the first. Kannon Kamp was walked scoring the first run of the game, and then an RBI single quickly made it 2-0. The bases were still loaded.

Up stepped Shaun Ferguson. He connected with a fastball just enough to get it over the fence, clearing the bases with a grand slam to make it 6-0. It was his only hit of the day, but it was good for four RBI's. He also scored a run in the sixth while pinch running.

Logan Sternickle started on the mound for the Explorers tossing the first three innings. He allowed four hits and two runs while picking up two K's. Hayden Sherman pitched the other four innings in relief and picked up five strikeouts only allowing one more run to cross the plate. He also had two hits and an RBI and went 2-3 with a walk.

The Shells scored a run in the first, third and fifth innings and only trailed 6-3 after five. There was plenty of ballgame left, but the deficit was too much to overcome.

As for Roxana, leadoff hitter, junior Nick Ward, scored all three runs for the Shells. He went 1-2 on the day with a single and a walk.

Sophomore Elias Thies was the starting pitcher for Roxana and besides the situation in the first inning, had a solid outing. He threw five innings and picked up eight strikeouts.

"He's our number one guy," Shells head coach Jerry Wheaton said postgame about Thies. "He can be really good, and he just turned 16. When he locks in he can be a strikeout machine."

Coach Wheaton mentioned the six walks his pitchers gave up and that's where the Explorers shined.

Aidan Briggs threw the final two innings and picked up a couple of K's as well for Roxana.

If the rain holds out, Roxana will be back in action today against a struggling Oilers team (3-16) as they look to snap their losing streak. First pitch is scheduled for 4 p.m. at East-Alton Wood River. The Oilers are Roxana's only conference win this season.

Marquette will get a much-deserved day off before hosting a couple of non-conference games this weekend. They take on Belleville East at 4:30 p.m. on Friday and Staunton at

10 a.m. Saturday morning. The Explorers will play seven of their last nine games at home at Gordon Moore Park.

