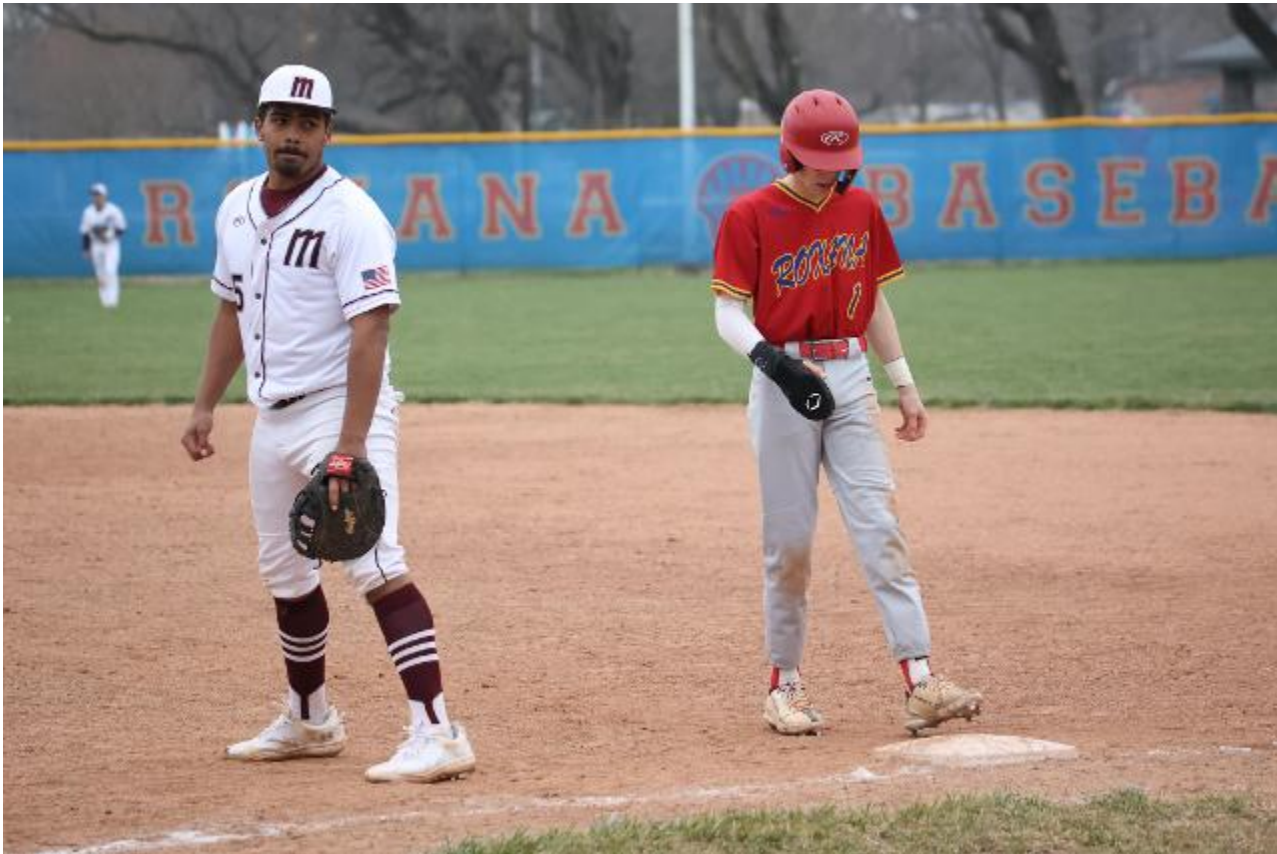


# Roxana Rallies Back But Still Falls A Run Short To Red Bud

by Bradley Piros, Reporter  
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ROXANA - Red Bud scored six times in the opening inning before Roxana rallied to tie the game in the bottom of the sixth, only to see the Musketeers score the winning run in the top of the seventh to defeat the Shells by a score of 8-7.

After giving up a six spot in the top of the first, Roxana battled back with three runs in the second, one run in the fourth and fifth, and another two in the sixth to tie the game up at 7-7.

Unfortunately for them, Red Bud drove in the winning run in the top of the seventh and the Shells couldn't respond.

Roxana head coach Jerry Wheaton blamed his team's loss on a lack of focus and harped on it to his team postgame.

"We are so young this year," Wheaton said. "We're not experienced enough or good enough right now to not be focused all the time."

Mason Crump led Roxana with three hits and an RBI, while Max Autery had a pair of hits. Zeb Katzmarek had two RBIs while Aiden Briggs, Kael Hester, and Caleb Wonders also drove home runs.

Briggs struck out four on the mound for the Shells, while Trevor Gihring fanned two.

The Musketeers are now 3-1, while Roxana goes to 1-2.

Wheaton, albeit not happy with Thursday's performance, knows his team is ready to win, and has what it takes to do so.

"They're hungry, they want to win now. They're already tired a week and a half into the season of being called the young guys, they're rebuilding."

Roxana's team is made up of four seniors and three juniors. The rest are underclassmen. According to Wheaton three expected starters didn't come back out for this season and the Shells also lost their top hitter in junior Elias Thies who tore his ACL during wrestling season.

Wheaton agreed that his young team is still bought in and can still make some noise this year.

"I think our pitchers throw enough strikes, we put the ball in play enough, we don't strike out a lot, and we're competing right now," he said.

The two losses this season for the Shells have both come by just one run, a 3-2 loss to Jersey in nine innings and now another heartbreaker to Red Bud.

Wheaton's goal is simple and remains the same since last season, get better every day.

"Win total wise, we don't think too much about that. Every game we play I make a list of things that we have to work on, a lot of it is situation stuff."

The Shells will be back at home tomorrow, March 25, at home against Litchfield in a doubleheader. Games start at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.