

Griffins Claim 2A Regional Baseball Title 8-0 Over Roxana

by Nathan Tucker
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ROXANA - The 2A Roxana Regional final saw local juggernauts Father McGivney take on the hosting Shells Saturday. As has been the story for the Griffins this season, a complete team performance saw them roll to an 8-0 win at Roxana Park.

As the scoreline suggests, it was an ideal day at the office for Griffins head coach Chris Erwin and his team. They jumped out to an early lead in the first, as a Jacob McKee single drove in two.

McGivney added four more runs in the second. Kannon Kamp scored on a wild pitch from Roxana starter Aiden Briggs for the third, an Isaac Wendler single drove in the fourth, a Jackson Rodgers sacrifice fly brought home run number 5, and Jacob McKee smacked a double to drive home the sixth.

“It’s a good game against a good team. We just stuck to our game plan,” said Chris Erwin following the game. “I think it went very well. Gabe was good on the mound and it was an all-around good day for us.”

Indeed, senior starting pitcher Gabe Davis had a great day from the hill, neutralizing the Shells offense entirely for six innings. Smith had eleven strikeouts, allowing just two hits on the day.

“He worked the zone all over the place,” Chris Erwin said. “He was up and down, in and out. He really worked it, kept their guys off-balance, and worked his slider in. He’s a very difficult pitcher to hit when he’s working all over the zone.”

Roxana brought in senior arm Nick Cotter in relief of Aidan Briggs, and offered some stability from the mound for a Shells team that was searching for it in Saturday’s game. Cotter put in a few quick 1-2-3 innings, giving his team a chance down the stretch.

“He came in a big moment there and put up zeros,” said Roxana head coach Jerry Wheaton. “He’s had a few really tough outings, but other than that, he’s been dynamite for us. He’s started for us, he’s come out of the pen, he’s always ready to go.”

Father McGivney tacked on their seventh and eighth runs in the fifth, well clear of a possible comeback. Kannon Kamp’s sac fly brought in Jacob McKee, and Drew Kleinheider crossed the plate on a Nick Franklin double.

Gabe Smith’s day on the mound ended after six, and junior Ryker Keller came in for the seventh and sat down the Shells 1-2-3 to seal the 2A Regional for the Griffins. It’s a Griffins’ team that is only two years separated from a run to the 1A State Championship, ultimately finishing as the runners-up to Farina South Central.

Having made the move up to 2A has been a success story for the Griffins, already widely considered one of the best baseball teams in the state. They’ll move on to Sectionals in Breese, and face the Wooden Shoes of Teutopolis.

“We’ll try to get a good report on (Teutopolis),” said Griffins head coach Chris Erwin. “But I like what we’re doing, so we want to try and impose what we do on them. Whichever team it is, it will be a good weekend of baseball.”

While the season ends Saturday for Jerry Wheaton’s Shells, he’s optimistic of the future of his program and proud of how his team played on the year. “I’m proud of our young guys, we got short-gamed by (McGivney) last time, and our kids battled all day.”

“We’re just going to keep getting better,” Wheaton continued. “We have three seniors, unfortunately, leaving us, but I bring everybody else back, it’s hopefully going to be an exciting few years for our program. We’re excited that we fought and had an opportunity to play one of the best teams in the state.”



