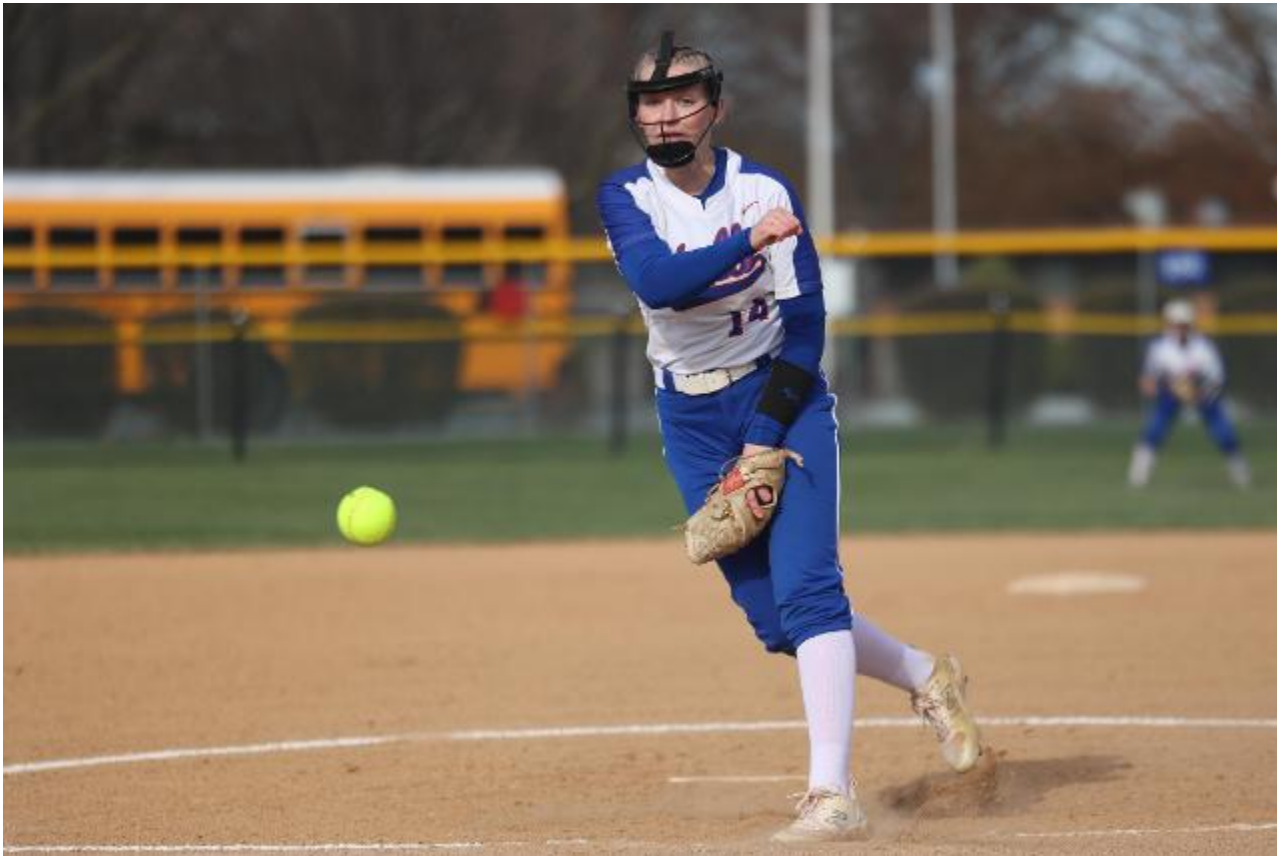


Shells Hold On For Close Win Over CM To Remain Undefeated

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
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ROXANA - The Shells are off to an unprecedented 4-0 start this season after a 4-3 win over rivals Civic Memorial Wednesday afternoon.

Calista Stahlhut started in the circle for Roxana and was a difference-maker in this game. She threw a complete game allowing six hits while striking out seven and getting herself out of a couple of sticky situations.

"They're a solid team, no doubt about it," CM head coach Lucas Angelo said of Roxana. "They have some pretty impressive stats, and Stahlhut in the circle always gives them a chance to win."

CM helped them out a little in the first inning when the Shells went hitless but still plated two runs.

Ava Cherry got things started with a leadoff walk and then stole second after Lilli Ray struck out. Stahlhut reached on a seeming error, sending Cherry to third before Ridley Allen hit a sacrifice RBI scoring Cherry and putting Stahlhut on third. She scored right after on a passed ball to make it 2-0.

"It looks like we've never played defense before," Angelo said.

"Not taking anything away from Roxana because they hit the ball hard, but we gave them two runs in the first inning. They had zero hits and scored two runs, and you just can't do that against a team like them. They will capitalize on it and that's exactly what they did."

What looked like an error was credited as a hit to Stahlhut, so the Shells did score two runs with a hit in the first.

Both teams went three-up, three-down in the second inning. CM pitcher Megan Griffith struck out the side. She also pitched a complete game finishing with seven Ks.

The Eagles got one back in the top of the third thanks to a leadoff extra-base hit from Bryleigh Ward. She eventually stole third and then scored off of Griffith's RBI single to cut the deficit to 2-1.

The Shells responded with a single run in the same inning after Cherry singled, stole second, and then went to third after Macey Craig's groundout. Stahlhut brought Cherry home with an RBI single to make it 3-1.

The top of the fourth was the first of two jams that Stahlhut had to try and get out of.

Skylar Johnson hit a leadoff single with Grace Burton pinch running. After Danika Chester was walked and Lauren Hardy singled, CM had the bases loaded with nobody out.

Stahlhut went to work and forced a popup from Ella Landers and then struck out Emma Wade and Ward to keep her team in it.

"Bases loaded nobody out, we had a popup to the shortstop and two strikeouts," Angelo said. "We work on that in practice. We just didn't execute today and that's how the game of softball goes."

After Stahlhut went three-up, three-down in the top of the fifth, she had a hit in the home half to get things going again. She later scored after Kennedy Robien's RBI single to make it 4-1.

The Eagles still had life thanks to another run in the sixth.

Johnson reached on an error followed by a single from Chester. Lauren Hardy hit into a fielder's choice sending Johnson to third. Allison Friedel, who was pinch-running for Chester, was out at second.

Landers immediately hit into another FC, sending Johnson home to make it 4-2. The rally could've continued but after Wade's single, Landers was tagged out on her way to third.

CM struck again in the seventh with a leadoff single from Ward followed by a double down the third-base line from Thien that sent Ward home, making it 4-3.

Thien stood on the second as the game-tying run, but Stahlhut battled until the end, striking out three of the next four batters to end the game.

"Stahls did a great job out there," Roxana head coach Wade Stahlhut said. "She had 138 pitches for the game, which is a little more than we would obviously want. But, she battled when we needed her there. The spins were working, the off-speeds were working whenever we needed it. She's just a bulldog on the mound. She's going to give it everything she's got until the very end."

She proved to be a tough at-bat as well, finishing with three hits and an RBI helping the Shells remain undefeated, something their coach didn't see coming.

"We knew at the beginning of the season we were going to have to grind out games, especially with the schedule the way it is," coach Stahlhut said. "So, did it go the way we expected? I mean, 4-0, we're excited about that."

Roxana plays next on Saturday at 10 a.m. against Marquette Catholic at Gordon Moore Park.

CM drops to 3-2 on the season and continues a busy five-game week today, Thursday, March 21 at home against Piasa Southwestern. They then travel to Carrollton on Friday. Both games start at 4:30 p.m.