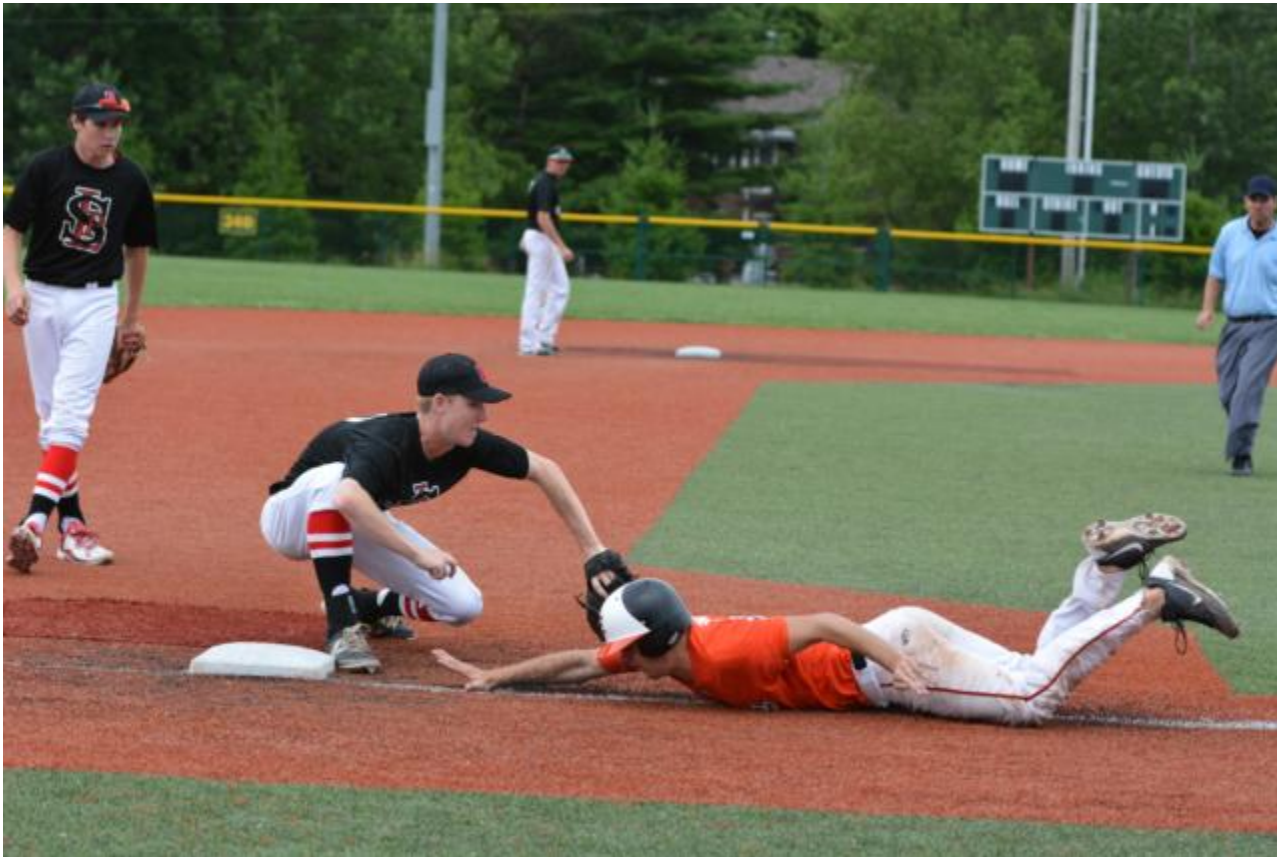


Edwardsville's under-17 summer baseball team erupts for rally in bottom of sixth for 7-5 win

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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Edwardsville's under-17 summer baseball team finally got through a game without having to endure a rain delay after their two previous games had come to a weather-related halt following the third inning.

The Tigers also did something that could bode well for their future – come from behind to win a game.

Edwardsville surrendered an early lead to the St. Louis Pirates club team and found themselves trailing 5-3 through the middle of the sixth inning Tuesday afternoon at the Edwardsville High JV field, but a four-run rally in the bottom of the sixth gave the Tigers a 7-5 win over the Pirates.

“Our midweek games differ some from the tournament games we play,” said Tiger coach Tim Funkhouser. “In games like these, we focus more on getting some reps with our pitchers, getting our hitters some at-bats and moving guys around. That's a positive thing; it opens up some possibilities for the guys.

“We had some good defensive plays today and got some big hits from guys like Andrew Yancik (who had a key sixth-inning double that put Edwardsville on top to stay).”

The Tigers got out to an early lead, and got that lead despite not having a hit; in fact, neither team had a base hit until the fifth inning. Edwardsville's first run came when Cole Cimarolli walked to open the bottom of the first and went to second when a pickoff try sailed past first. Cimarolli then stole third and came home when Cole Hansel grounded to second.

In the second, Trey Riley drew a one-out walk and went to second when Yancik was hit by a pitch. Both runners advanced on a passed ball and when Will Messer grounded to shortstop, Riley scored for a 2-0 Edwardsville lead.

Things stayed that way until the fifth, when the Pirates' Max Hunter reached on a leadoff error and went to second when Jordan Richardson singled. A Kevin Graham double brought home Hunter to halve the lead before John Bischoff lifted a sacrifice fly to center to tie the game at 2-2. Edwardsville regained the lead in the bottom of the fifth Messer, Jordan Yenne and Dan Pichotti all singled, Pichotti's single driving in Messer, to put the Tigers back on top at 3-2.

The Pirates got the lead back in the top of the sixth when Edwardsville's Mark Smith opened the inning with a leadoff walk and went to third when Jonathan Ray sacrificed, Smith using his speed to reach third on the play. Brennan Fitzpatrick then walked to put runners at the corners Austin Ruesch, also from Edwardsville, walked to load the bases. Tyler Brinkman hit into a fielder's choice to bring in a run, and an error allowing Hayden Schafer to reach base brought in two more runs to put the Pirates ahead.

Undaunted, Hansel walked to open the Tiger half of the sixth and Collin Clayton and Joel Quirin singled to load up the bases. Riley then grounded to short to bring home Hansel, setting up Yancik to stroke a two-run double to the fence in left-center to put Edwardsville back on top. Messer then singled in Yancik for an insurance run, and the Pirates went down in order in the seventh to preserve the win.

Next up for the Tigers is a tournament in Louisville, Ky., beginning Thursday. Edwardsville opens pool play in the tournament with a 3:45 p.m. Thursday game against the Indy Bats of Indianapolis, then meets up with Vipers black at 11 a.m. Friday, followed by a 6 p.m. match against the Midwest Rebels. Pool play concludes at 11:15 a.m. Saturday against the Indiana Crushers.

The top 16 teams following pool play will take part in a single-elimination bracket throughout the day Sunday; the final is set for 6 p.m. at the University of Louisville's baseball stadium.



