

Sports

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Hard-hitting games

Miscues keep Hawks from shot at Final Four

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SPORTS EDITOR

A three-run homer is nice to have in any inning.

But Chaska's Troy Harlander picked the perfect time.

The senior outfielder launched his first home run in two seasons Saturday to propel Chaska to a 10-8 victory over Edina and help the Hawks stave off elimination in the Subsection 6-3A Tournament at Braemar.

Chaska started the playoffs with an 8-4 loss Friday to Edina and a routed Eagan 12-2 in a five-inning contest Saturday morning.

The win landed the Hawks in the Subsection final Tuesday against Hopkins. Hopkins took advantage of six Hawk fielding errors to prevail 11-6 and remain undefeated in the tourney.

Slow start

Chaska hit the playoffs with a thud, dropping the opener 8-4 to Edina on Friday.

The Hornets spun together four singles, a walk and a triple to put up three runs in the first inning. Edina then dinged five hits in the second inning and scored five more, thanks in part to a pair of Hawks infield errors.

The Hawks pushed three across in the first inning as Anthony Brenner brought home Cory Glieden and Kory Aretz with a single and scored on a double by third baseman Dave Kerber.

Hawk pitcher Jeff Strand took over for Harlander in the second inning, and did not allow a run the rest of the game. Strand struck out four and walked two, while scattering five hits.

Brenner had another RBI double in the seventh to bring home Aretz for the last run.

Wildcat rout

Brenner and Harlander also helped turn the momentum in the Hawks' first game Saturday against Eagan. Brenner clouted a solo homer to center field to make it 4-1, Chaska.

Harlander lined a stand-up,



PHOTOS BY TIM MCGOVERN

Chaska senior Troy Harlander gets metal on the ball during Section 6-3A action Saturday at Braemar. Harlander hit a three-run home run in the game to help the Hawks to a 10-8 win over Edina.

two-out triple. Contending that Harlander failed to touch second base, Eagan pitcher Tyler Peterson stepped off the rubber and tossed to second base for an appeal. Meanwhile, Harlander took off for home. Eagan had Harlander in a rundown, but the Hawks senior was able to score after the relays left home plate unguarded.

The Hawks sent 12 batters to the plate the next inning and scored seven runs. Aretz drove in Glieden and Sam Welter with a double.

Brenner walked, senior catcher Cory Poppitz singled and Harlander brought home two with a base hit.

Chaska senior infielder Aaron Olson was hit by a pitch to load the bases and pinch-hitter Mike Syverson singled to score two more.

The Hawks snuffed a Wildcat comeback with a double play in the fourth inning.

Starting pitcher Brenner (3-4) threw a 1-2-3 fifth inning to invoke the 10-run rule and end the game early.

Drama time

Chaska took an early 2-0 lead Saturday against Edina in the double-elimination tournament. Aretz hit an RBI single to score Glieden in the first inning and senior Anthony Brenner clubbed a towering solo home run in the third.

Edina took a 3-2 lead in the fourth, but Chaska answered right away. Leadoff hitter Kenny Lidke beat out an infield single and Matt Dooner was safe on an Edina error. Glieden walked to load the bases and Aretz delivered a single that scored Lidke, but Edina threw out Dooner at the plate. Glieden and Aretz trotted home on a double by Brenner.

Edina scratched back to make it a one-run game before turning the game around in the sixth with a three-run homer by Corey Canakes off Hawk reliever Jeff Engelhardt.

But the Hawks had too much power left. Brenner launched a towering blast to right-center that hit off a tree 30 feet over the fence 330 feet from home plate.

Kerber and Poppitz walked to bring up Harlander, who pulled a pitch over the fence in right field, scoring all three.

Olson then collected his second hit of the game and scored on a single by Tyler Polster.

Chaska senior lefthander Rob Mobeck, who got the final out of the sixth inning, locked in to induce a pop fly, a strikeout and fielded a tapper to finish the game. Hawk freshman Brad Hand started the game, giving up seven hits and

four runs (one earned), and striking out three.

Royals prevail

Hopkins reached the Section 6-3A Final Four, taking a slugfest from the Hawks, 11-6.

Brenner hit his seventh home run of the season and drove in three runs to give him 24 for the year. His three homers in the previous three playoff games and a complete-game victory on the mound landed him an Athlete of the Week slot from the Star Tribune.

Kerber added his fifth home run and team-leading 25th RBI.

Chaska took a 4-0 lead, but Hopkins scored 11 runs the next four innings.

Second baseman Cory Glieden singled and doubled and scored

Section 6-3A Final Four Tournament

at Athletic Park, Chaska

Games Friday

Minnetonka (14-9) vs. Burnsville (13-8), 4:30 p.m.
Eastview (16-7) vs. Hopkins (16-6), 7 p.m.

Games Saturday

Quarterfinal losers, 11 a.m.
Quarterfinal winners, 1:30 p.m.

Game Tuesday, June 7

Semifinal winners, 7 p.m.

Results Tuesday, May 31

Subsection 1
Minnetonka 6, Jefferson 3

Subsection 2
Burnsville 9, Richfield 4

Subsection 3
Eastview 3, Holy Angels 1

Subsection 4
Hopkins 11, Chaska 6

Lake Conference

Team	Conf.	All
Eden Prairie	14-3	17-5
Lakeville	11-6	16-7
Eastview	10-7	16-7
Burnsville	10-7	13-8
Chaska	9-8	14-10
Jefferson	8-9	10-13
Apple Valley	7-10	9-14
Kennedy	7-10	9-14
Eagan	5-12	6-14
Rosemount	4-13	10-15

Section scoring scarce

Chaska nearly reaches section semifinals

Tim McGovern
SPORTS EDITOR

Runs have been hard to come by in a Chaska softball game this season.

In 15 of its 23 games this season, Chaska has either recorded a shutout (five times) or were blanked themselves (10 times). The Hawks gave up one or two runs six times, but prevailed in just one of those games.

So how the Section 2-3A playoffs went was nothing new to the squad.

"We were finally starting to pull together at the end," junior shortstop Arie Emde said. "It seemed like we struggled all season long."

Hawk sophomore pitcher Mara Litzer threw a no-hitter and struck out 13 in a 2-0 victory over Waseca in the Section 2-3A playoff opener May 24. Litzer walked two batters in gaining her fifth shutout of the season.

Litzer followed with another top-notch performance as the Hawks tipped New Ulm 2-1 later that evening.

Chaska scored a seventh-inning run and Litzer nailed down the win by retiring the Eagles 1-2-3 in the final half-inning.

"When we're on, we're on," Emde said. "We have a strong defense behind us. We seem to always come up from behind at the end."

Lakers by one

Chaska and No. 2 section seed Prior Lake then locked horns in a close battle in the section semifinals on Thursday.

But the shutout went the Lakers' way, as sophomore pitcher April Borchardt made an early run stick to lead her team past the Hawks 1-0.

Jackie Fermanich started the fourth inning with a single be-

fore Borchardt quickly recorded two outs on popups. Fermanich was caught stealing second base to end the inning.

Litzer fielded a soft grounder in between a pair of strikeouts to briskly bring up the Hawk batters for the fifth inning.

Junior shortstop Arie Emde rapped a one-out single and safely stole second base, but got no further as the Hawks struck out twice.

Chaska got a sixth-inning rally going, as Litzer and Fermanich drew one-out walks. Senior outfielder Kristin Kahler looked to drive in the Hawks' first run of the day with a sharp liner, but the Lakers' Trina Stock snagged the ball and stepped on the nearby first-base bag to record an inning-ending double play.

Laker junior Sarah Bueltel dropped in a one-out single in the sixth inning, but Litzer got the next two batters swinging.

Borchardt would not let the Hawks get going in the seventh inning, inducing two fly outs and a pop foul behind third base to sew up the narrow victory.

Season ends

Chaska bowed out of the double-elimination tournament with a 2-1 loss to Orono on Saturday morning.

The Hawks finished 8-15 on the season. Half the wins came in the season-opening and season-ending tournaments. The Hawks enjoyed a three-game win streak in midseason before running into the strength of the Lake schedule again.

Chaska will have much of its lineup back for the 2006 season, as it loses senior outfielders Jackie Bruers, Kahler, Jenni Kearney, Laura Egdorf and Christina Swan.

Juniors include Fermanich at first base, Emde at shortstop, Elyse Morrow at third base and outfielder Kari Kummer. The infield will be further in good hands as Simone Parcels will follow up her solid sophomore season at second base, and freshman catcher Kelsey Kalkman returns.



PHOTOS BY TIM MCGOVERN

Chaska sophomore pitcher Mara Litzer delivers a strike during the Section 2-3A quarterfinal game against Prior Lake on Thursday in North Mankato. Litzer threw a no-hitter in the opening game against Waseca, striking out 13.



Chaska junior shortstop Arie Emde puts a tag on Prior Lake's April Borchardt in the fifth inning Thursday. The Hawks finished the season 8-15 overall after a pair of playoff victories.

Tennis team ends year at sections

Chaska's boys tennis team went up against top competition in the Section 2AA individual tournament last week in Eden Prairie.

Tony O'Konek and Tyler Joe were the two singles entrants for Chaska.

O'Konek, a sophomore, received the No. 8 seed and fell 6-3, 6-0 to Minnetonka's Drew Carlson.

Joe, an eighth-grader, lost 6-0, 6-0 in the first round to the No. 3 section seed.

Chaska's doubles team of Charlie Newell and Will Zimmer took the seventh seed and faced Roger Trousdale and Max Rixe of Buffalo in the first round, losing 6-2, 6-0.

Hawk seniors Jon Eklo and Aaron Loomis received the eighth seed in the doubles

bracket and won their first-round match against Peter Swanson and freshman Patrick Lew of Minnetonka. Eklo and Loomis then fell 6-1, 6-0 to Orono's top-seeded doubles team of Harry Whiteley and Adam Estoclet.

Whiteley and Estoclet went on to capture the doubles title, topping Mankato East's Matt Evans and John Julian 6-2, 6-2.

Eden Prairie's Adam Lee handed Buffalo freshman Michael Sicora his first loss of the season in the singles finals 6-4, 6-3. Sicora took on Minnetonka's Jimmy Portnoy in a true-second match on Tuesday.

The state Class 2A tournament takes place June 7-10 at the Northwest Racquet Club in Bloomington.

Mueller closing in on Everest's summit

Chaska's Neal Mueller and his mountaineering group were battling high winds and enduring sleepless nights, but were very close to reaching the summit of Mt. Everest, at last report.

Mueller's group has a very limited weather window to work with in reaching the 29,029-foot peak. The group reported they had planned to attempt the summit Tuesday evening or Wednesday morning.

Mueller and his climbing partner Chris Grubb are vying to scale the tallest mountains on all seven continents. They have climbed five so far, with Everest and Australia's Mt. Kosciuszko left to go.

The monetary and physical demands of the two-month

expedition, as well as the low oxygen level, makes judgement cloudy. The group's guide, Jim Williams, is keeping a level head.

"The drive for the summit often defies the normal limit of mountaineering safety," Williams wrote. "Those who have spent their hard-earned money often put the summit ahead of their own life. This dangerous attitude is one thing we must all guard against. I and all the summit Sherpas will be keeping close track of the members as they attempt the summit."

Keep track of the group's progress and read previous dispatches at www.exploradus.com.