

BASEBALL

Cougars field a deeper, more confident lineup

By Eric Morken
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The Carlos Cougars baseball team stuck right with one of the best teams in the Resorters League through seven innings on Sunday afternoon.

The Osakis Hawks (2-0) broke out with five runs in the top of the eighth inning in a 10-3 win for the Hawks, but the way the Cougars played through much of the game is what player/manager Clarke Comer believes this team is capable of this summer.

“The depth is a huge plus for us compared to last year,” Comer said. “We added two pitchers, so that will be huge. We subtracted a different pitcher, and we lost a lockdown center fielder. We lost our catcher, so up the middle we’re trying to figure things out. But this is a group of guys who played together, and I think it should be a fun year.”

Much of the Cougars’ roster is made up of players from Alexandria. Kyle Schaible started on the mound on Sunday and gave Carlos five good innings.

He left with his team with-in one run at 3-2 after allowing three unearned runs. Those came in the third inning when an error at short allowed two runs to score, and a wild pitch brought in another run with two outs.

“There were a few errors, but that’s amateur baseball,” Comer said. “Last year, it was a lot of throwing errors, which was irritating. This year, we’re keeping the ball in front of ourselves. Now it’s just figuring out who fits together and the pieces in the lineup.”

Carlos got an RBI single from Alexandria’s Bryce Ludwig in the bottom of the fifth to make it a one-run game. Osakis extended things from there, getting a run in the sixth and opening up a 9-2 lead in the eighth with five more. Alexandria’s Blake Radtke drove in a run for the Cougars in their half of the eighth with an RBI ground out, but it was too little, too late.

“Seems like it’s kind of a carryover from last year where that one inning just



Eric Morken / Echo Press

Carlos Cougars’ pitcher Hunter Schoenrock fields a sacrifice bunt by Osakis’ Zach Weir and tosses on to first for an out on Sunday afternoon. The Hawks won the game 10-3 to move to 2-0 on the season.

derails you,” Comer said. “We got a lot more batting practice in, which was fun to see some guys really took advantage of that. But we just need more consistent at-bats. It’s awesome when we get a couple guys scraping it around, but it takes a whole lineup 1-9.”

The Cougars have a full July schedule during this shortened summer season due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Barring changes, they are scheduled to be in Urbank to play the Bombers on July 10 at 7:30 p.m. before home games against Sauk Centre (July 11, 7

p.m.), Long Prairie (July 12, 4 p.m.), Kensington (July 24, 7 p.m.) and Alexandria (July 26, 4 p.m.).

“I told them this year is our chance,” Comer said of his goals for this team. “We finally have a little depth. We have some pitching if it shows up. We get a ton of home games because not a lot of teams can play (on their home field). We’re very fortunate about that, and the guys have stepped up to help out around the field (after games). That was one of my biggest pet peeves last year is guys showed up,

threw the ball all over the park and left. This year, to see that change, you can tell they’re here to play baseball.”

The region tournament will run over the course of three weekends in August as teams vie for a state tournament appearance. The Cougars believe they can compete up near the top of the league if the pieces fall into place.

“If we can get our pitching and our lineup figured out, I think we can be one of the top teams,” Comer said. “I have high hopes for this season.”

BERBERICH

From Page 10

community,” Osakis Hawks’ player/manager and family friend Doug Zimmel said. “We have their backs all the time, but it’s been pretty hard.”

Brady was a huge part of Osakis baseball as a sure-handed infielder. He was a fixture in the Osakis Silverstreaks high school lineup from early in his career, and finished that run as a shortstop named as the team’s MVP as a senior in 2017.

Brady also got his start with the Osakis Hawks amateur team in the Resorters Baseball League years ago. His Hawks teammates wore his No. 11 patch on the sleeve of their jerseys on Sunday afternoon. They then went out and won a 10-3 game against the Carlos Cougars on their way to a 2-0 start to the shortened summer season.

“We have a great time, and I thought we played well,” Zimmel said. “We brought in some high schoolers now who didn’t have a season, and they want to play. We have four good ball players out of them. They fit in well too. We’ve grown up together playing baseball our whole lives, so we have that connection.”

Osakis jumped out to a 3-0 lead in the top of the third inning after Lane crossed home plate on a wild pitch. The Cougars kept it close at 4-2 through seven innings, but the Hawks blew things open in the eighth.

Brandon Giesler cracked an RBI double that inning to get the scoring started. Luke Imdieke, Colter Fortenberry, Lane Berberich and Drew Fearing all



Eric Morken / Echo Press

Lane Berberich goes to the air to throw back to first for an out after charging a ball from second base during Sunday’s 10-3 win over Carlos.

added an RBI to take complete control.

This is an Osakis team that has high hopes of making it through the regional tournament to earn a spot at state. Young players often have to head to college right around playoff time in amateur baseball, and the Hawks have been bit by that bug in the past.

“I’m competitive, and I know we have the talent to make a run,” Lane said. “We need to be able to stick together as a team. That’s the tough thing is when we have people and then we lose them at the end of the year. Last year, losing Brady sucked. Here too, if we lose those guys, our team just completely changes. I still think we have enough talented guys that we can make a run no matter what.”

The young players on Osakis’ roster this summer add to this team’s pitching depth. Carter Rost went four innings and allowed just one unearned run against Carlos. Hunter Infanger ended the game with two solid frames around Zimmel throwing three innings. Both Rost and Infanger are recently-graduated seniors.

Throughout the entire game, the Osakis players played like they often do. Clean and competitive, but with frequent laughter. This is a tight-knit group that likes to have fun with each other while on the field. Lane was surrounded by friends on Sunday, and has felt the support of the entire Osakis community since Brady’s diagnosis.

“Everybody has been

“I feel like Brady is still with me and us. Hopefully we can keep playing hard for him. He wanted everything for it to be gone so he could be out here with us. I know everybody feels that too, and we’re going to just keep playing hard for him.”

LANE BERBERICH, Osakis Hawks’ second baseman on playing for his younger brother

awesome,” Lane said. “There’s so many people who have stepped up and helped out me and my family through it all. Everybody has been amazing.”

The community said goodbye to Brady early this week on the field where he made so many memories. A visitation was held on Monday from 4-8 p.m. at the LeRoy Mackove Athletic Complex baseball field in Osakis. Funeral services were Tuesday at 11 a.m. back at the field. Those who attended were encouraged to wear sports jerseys.

In the midst of a difficult week, Brady’s love for baseball is a way friends and family can celebrate his life. For a few hours on Sunday, it offered a brother and former teammates a chance to laugh together while playing the game they loved playing with him.

“I feel like Brady is still with me and us,” Lane said. “Hopefully we can keep playing hard for him. He wanted everything for it to be gone so he could be out here with us. I know everybody feels that too, and we’re going to just keep playing hard for him.”

BRIEFS

From Page 10

the FCA volleyball camp that is set for Aug. 14-15.

The camp is for players in grades 5-8, and registration must be completed by Aug. 7. There will be hands-on instruction to teach proper

technique, as well as situational game play. The two-day camp will take place at Alexandria Area High School from 9 a.m. to noon on Aug. 14 and from 10 a.m. to noon on Aug. 15.

Alexandria Cardinals’ varsity volleyball coach Mary Byrne will be the coach at the camp. Byrne

has also spent time as a coach at Marshall High School, as well as collegiately at South Dakota State University and North Carolina State University.

As a player herself, Byrne graduated from the University of Nebraska in 1985. While with the Cornhuskers, she earned

All-Big Eight Conference status her sophomore through senior year.

Volleyball players interested in attending the camp at AAHS can register by going to www.alexandriafca.com/camps. Contact Gerry Hoelscher for more information at (320)-763-6766.



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