

Outlaws strand too many runners in league start

By Rongi Yost
Correspondent

The Outlaws packed in three league games this past week, but were only able to tally one victory. Sisters lost 6-2 at home to Cottage Grove on Monday, April 4, but two days later were able to take down the Sweet Home Huskies 3-1 in a home match-up. On Friday, the Outlaws lost 3-2 at Elmira.

In Monday's game, the Outlaws banged out nine hits against Cottage Grove, but were unable to string them together to bring home runners. Twice, the Outlaws left the bases loaded with no outs, and over the course of the game left a total of 10 runners stranded on base.

Alec Gannon and Jake Stevens scored Sisters' two runs in the contest. Ryan Funk went three-for-four with a double, and Gannon went two-for-four.

On Wednesday, the Outlaws defeated the Sweet Home Huskies 3-1 at home in Sisters.

Sisters got their three runs off of five hits and had no errors in the game. The Huskies got one run off two hits and committed one error.

Gannon scored Sisters' first run of the contest. Alec

got on base with a single, stole second, and was brought home off a Zach Morgan base-hit single to left field. At the close of the first inning the Outlaws were on top 1-0.

The Outlaws added two runs in the second. Stevens got to first via a walk, and Will Werts followed with a single to left field. Gannon hit a ball to second, an error occurred, and Stevens came home. Christopher Luz had a safety-squeeze bunt down the first-base line to score Werts.

Ryan Funk was the Outlaws' winning pitcher, which earned him his first-ever varsity victory. Funk pitched six innings and recorded three strike-outs. Morgan struck-out the side in the seventh to earn the save.

"Ryan wasn't even scheduled to pitch," said Coach Steve Hodges. "He just found out we needed him to pitch a half-hour before the start of the game. He did an outstanding job and kept the hitters off balance..."

Two spectacular plays highlighted the Outlaws outstanding defense. Morgan, bare-handed, fielded a short hopper at third, and — off-balance — threw out the runner at first by a step. Gannon made an out-stretched diving play at second and threw the

runner out at first by a step.

"Morgan's play was just outstanding," said Hodges. "You don't very often see a play like this at the high school level. It was a momentum-builder and a game-changer. It was big motivation to us to really compete and finish it out. It really was a catalyst for us winning today."

Sisters wrapped up their week with a devastating loss to Elmira on Friday.

The Outlaws out-hit the Falcons 7-4 and did a better job on the mound, but the big factor in the loss was the team's 10 strike-outs.

"When you have 10 strike-outs, it's pretty hard to say your offense is firing on all cylinders," said Hodges.

A bright spot came when Ryan Cook hit a solo home run 350 feet over the left-center fence, and tied the game at 1-1.

Elmira added a run in the third, but the Outlaws answered with a run of their own to tie it up 2-2. Morgan reached first on a single, and Jake Larson got to first via a walk. Jake Stevens stepped up to the plate, drove the ball to the fence, and it bounced over.

"That really proved to be a disadvantage to us, because it was an automatic ground rule double," stated Hodges.



PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

First baseman Connor Lake with an out against Sweet Home.

"Stevens got the RBI for driving home Morgan, but Jake (Larson), who would have scored if the ball would have stopped at the fence, was held up at third."

The Falcons drove in their final run in the fifth and held on for the win.

Hodges told *The Nugget* that Morgan threw six strong innings for the Outlaws, and only gave up four hits. Hodges added he was pleased with the defense, all the pitching efforts, which have kept the Outlaws in games, but isn't happy about all the runners that have been left on base.

"We're leaving too many

runners that are in scoring position on base," said Hodges. "If we'd just scored half of those we've left on, we'd be undefeated in league. It's just a matter of putting the ball in play, especially with less than two outs and runners in scoring position. If we can do that, then we'll see the rewards. And, that's where you build momentum."

Sisters was to play at Junction City on Monday, April 11. On Wednesday, April 13, Sisters plays at home against Sutherlin, and on Friday they will match up at home against Cottage Grove.

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