

SPORTS

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Gary Henley | Sports Reporter
 ghenley@dailyastorian.com

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Knappa: 'A lot of people are going to remember this one'

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In his 16th year, Miller collects his third state championship with the Loggers. This was the "feel good win."

"You don't forget any of 'em, because it's the kids that you remember," he said. "But in a baseball sense, a lot of people are going to remember this one."

Braves in charge for five

For five innings, the game and the good memories belonged to the Braves, who were making their first state championship appearance since 1990.

Aggressive base-running, squeeze bunts that brought in runs, extra-base hits, a young pitcher that had Knappa hitters off balance ... the Braves were looking like the Loggers, before the Loggers started looking like the Loggers.

"It looked like we were the team that had never been here before," coach Miller said. "Nervous mistakes, unable to hit spots from the mound ... it wasn't us, for whatever reason."

A low point for the Loggers — after Reedsport's Wayde Doane scored on a squeeze bunt by Korde Parmenter in the third inning, Knappa's return throw to the mound went over the head of pitcher Dale Takalo, and Griffin Lavigne raced all the way in from second base to score for a 5-0 lead.

And it got worse before it got better.

Knappa freshman Eli Takalo took over on the mound in the fourth, and the Braves greeted the freshman with two straight hits, including a triple by Joseph Hixenbaugh that scored Marc Chaney, and another squeeze bunt by Nick Glover that brought in Hixenbaugh for a 7-0 advantage.

And finally, a Logger error in the top of the fifth put runners at first and second, which was followed by Parmenter's sacrifice bunt and a two-run single from Kyle Barnes for a seemingly safe 9-1 lead.

Sweet dreams, nightmares

But the comeback that will provide sweet dreams for the Logger faithful, is also going to give nightmares to Reedsport fans for years to come.

The Braves had several opportunities to secure a win in the late stages of the game.

In the bottom of the sixth, Knappa's Logan Bartlett drove in Dale Takalo, and an errant pickoff attempt by the Braves allowed Andrew Goozee to score a second run, bringing Knappa to within 9-3.

In the top of the seventh, Reedsport's first two batters reached base, but both were gunned down by Logger catcher Kaleb "Bubba" Miller, who threw out Parmenter at third and Javier Analco at second.

Both were huge outs, because Chaney followed with a walk, then took second on a wild pitch, before Takalo got Hixenbaugh to fly out to center, keeping Knappa within six runs.

Reedsport's starter on the mound, freshman Dallas McGill, threw six solid innings, but simply ran out of steam in the bottom of the seventh, when he gave up a leadoff walk to Kaleb Miller, hit Cruz with a pitch, and gave up a single to Dale Takalo to load the bases with no outs.

McGill was replaced by Barnes, and Barnes' luck wasn't any better, as the sophomore beamed the only two batters he faced to force in a pair of runs.

And that's about where it came unraveled for the Braves.

Chaney replaced Barnes on the mound, and he was greeted with a sharp single to left field by Logan Bartlett.

"Once Bartlett got the hit, that's when I really felt like, we're gonna win this," Jason Miller said. "Once (McGill) came out, I didn't feel like there was anything that could stop us."

Still, Chaney responded with two straight strikeouts, to bring Reedsport to



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

The Knappa Loggers won the state championship on a walk-off after being down 9-1 earlier in the game Friday in Keizer against Reedsport. More photos from the state championship game online at DailyAstorian.com/sports



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

The Knappa Loggers celebrate winning the state championship Friday in Keizer against Reedsport.



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Mason Hoover, right, attempts the pick-off for the Knappa Loggers during the state championship game against Reedsport.

within one out of victory.

And he was within one strike of closing the game with full counts on both Jason Miller and Kaleb Miller, but Chaney walked both to force in two more runs, setting the stage for Cruz's game-winning hit.

Chaney also had a 1-2 count on Cruz, when Cruz singled through the left side of the infield, scoring pinch runner Jacob Ford and Jason Miller, the Knappa senior who slid across home plate with the game-winner.

For Miller, the sprint to the plate ended the game, his high school career, and sparked one big Knappa celebration.

'Toughest three outs'

Entering the bottom of the seventh, coach Miller said "we just gave a reminder that these are going to be the toughest three outs that (the Braves) are ever going to have. Just take care of the technical stuff — take pitches until you get a strike, crowd the plate, let the pitcher feel pressure, and see what happens."

It wasn't a pretty game, numberswise, with a combined 11 walks and eight hit batters. But the HBPs (hit by pitches) kept the Loggers alive.

Cruz batted twice in the big rally, drawing a hit by pitch to help start the comeback. "In the last inning, when I got on and

we started moving around the bases, I realized then that this was going to be our time," Cruze said.

Jason Miller had been Knappa's last out of the sixth inning, grounding out to second to strand two base runners.

"I was pretty bummed about that at-bat," he said. "I thought it would be my last for sure, and I thought, 'I can't have that be my last high school at-bat.' I'm glad I got another chance.

"Our dugout did a good job of never giving up," Miller added. "You get down a little on yourself, but we knew that it wasn't over. We knew that we could hit off those guys — it was just a matter of when we could do it. It finally clicked in the last inning."

Instead of the freshman McGill, it was the freshman Eli Takalo who picked up the win on the mound.

"Eli did a great job," Jason Miller said. "Not a lot of freshmen could come in and do what he did right there."

Coach Miller added, "I give a lot of credit to our freshman who came in, for what most people in the crowd were probably figuring 'mop-up duty,'" trailing 5-0. "And he kept us in there, until we finally put some pressure on."

The 3-Run Barrier

In all five of their championship game appearances, the Loggers had never scored more than three runs.

It wasn't exactly Chuck Yeager breaking the sound barrier, but Knappa finally broke the three-run barrier in a state title game.

In Miller's three previous championship games, the Loggers defeated Hep-pner (3-1) and Monroe (3-0), and lost a 4-3 decision to Burns last year.

"We talked about that (Thursday)," he said. "Five times in Knappa's history, we've never scored over three runs in a championship."

And, during the seventh inning rally, "we actually mentioned it when we got our fifth run — 'Hey! We've scored five!'"

Visions of Victory

For Cruz, "I broke my leg last summer (playing summer baseball), and I remember just sitting on my bed for three months straight, and thinking 'I want to be back, we're going win it this year, and I'm going to do everything I can and hope it comes down to me.'"

"I didn't think it would happen, but I kind of envisioned it."

SCOREBOARD

BASEBALL

2A/1A State Championship

Knappa 10, Reedsport 9

Reedsport 212 220 0-9 8 4

Knappa 000 102 7-9 7 3

McGill, Barnes (7), Hixenbaugh

(7) and Lavigne; D.Takalo, E.Takalo

(4) and K.Miller. W: E. Takalo.

L: Hixenbaugh. RBI: Reedsport,

Glover 2, Barnes 2, Hixenbaugh,

McGill, Lavigne, Parmenter; Knappa,

Cruz 2, Bartlett 2, J.Miller, K.

Miller, Hoover, Goozee, E.Takalo.

2B: Reedsport, McGill, Lavigne.

3B: Reedsport, Hixenbaugh. HBP:

Reedsport, Doane 2, Lavigne, Par-

menter; Knappa, K.Miller, Cruz,

Hoover, Goozee. SH: Reedsport,

Glover 2, Parmenter 2, Rohde. SF:

Knappa, E.Takalo. SB: Reedsport,

Parmenter; Knappa, Goozee. CS:

Reedsport, Parmenter, Analco.

Umpires: HP-Jamey Fisher;

1B-Earl Breon; 3B-Tom Brainard.

Players of the Game: Dallas

McGill (Reedsport); Reuben Acosta-Cruz (Knappa).

STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

6A Baseball

Clackamas 5, West Linn 1

5A Baseball

Churchill 5, Crater 1

4A Baseball

La Grande 8, Henley 5

3A Baseball

St. Mary's 5, Glide 3

2A/1A Baseball

Knappa 10, Reedsport 9

6A Softball

North Medford 11, Westview 3

5A Softball

Marist 12, Dallas 7

4A Softball

Henley 8, Crook County 6

3A Softball

Rainier 3, Dayton 2

2A/1A Softball

North Douglas 3, Pilot Rock 1

Oregon State claims regional with 8-1 win over Yale

By ANNE M. PETERSON
 Associated Press



Mark Ylen/Albany Democrat-Herald

Oregon State's Michael Gretler (10) celebrates his home run against Yale with Trevor Larnach (11) and Adley Rutschman, behind Larnach, during an NCAA college baseball regional tournament game in Corvallis Sunday.

CORVALLIS — Michael Gretler hit a three-run home run in the third inning and No. 1 national seed Oregon State went onto to win the Corvallis Regional with an 8-1 victory over Yale on Sunday night.

It was the 19th straight win for the Beavers (51-4), who will face the winner of the Clemson Regional.

Alex Stiegler hit an RBI double in the first inning to give Yale (34-17) the early lead. Earlier in the day Stiegler went 3-for-3 and drove in five runs to lead the Bulldogs to a 9-5 victory over Holy Cross and stay alive in the double-elimination regional.

Steven Kwan scored on Trevor Larnach's fielder's choice grounder in the bottom of the first to even the score. Two Yale errors allowed a pair of Oregon State runs in the bottom of the third inning before Gretler's home run.

Nick Madrigal had four base-hit bunts in the game. Brandon Eisert (5-0) pitched 3 2/3 scoreless innings of relief for the win.