



JON STINNETT/FOR THE SENTINEL

Braedon Buckland **high-fives** Logan Lowrey, who scored the Lions' lone run of the afternoon against Marist in game two, on a line-drive single by Christian Spear.

Lions *from B1*

lead to two runs.

But the Lions couldn't bring runners home in the seventh and eventually lost a close one, but not before fighting back from a six-run deficit. Combined, Cottage

Grove pitchers struck out 12 Vikings in the opener.

Three nights later, the Lions were back around the diamond to face Marist. As a young team entering a short season with little time to prepare, Cottage Grove can

expect to see something new just about every time they hit the field. During last Friday's home doubleheader against the Spartans, it was fairly obvious that the Lions were not ready for what they saw.

The Lions took to Kelley Field under beautiful sunny skies and uncommonly warm April temperatures. Unfortunately, their baseball fortunes didn't follow the weather. Junior Braedon Buckland got the start on the mound for Cottage Grove and, while Buckland was able to keep Marist mostly in check

early on, Spartan hitters still found frequent solid contact.

And the Lions couldn't have liked what they saw in Marist pitcher Lucas Patterson, who stymied one Cottage Grove batter after another. Patterson would eventually be lifted for Isaiah Hannah, but Hannah picked up right where his Spartan teammate left off.

Neither pitcher allowed a Lion batter to reach base, tallying a perfect game shutout on the way to a 20-0 Marist win in five innings.

Unfortunately for the Lions, momentum for

the Spartans carried over from the first game to the second, where a 10-run first inning gave Marist all the cushion it needed to again cruise to victory, this time a 27-1 tally.

A host of Lions pitchers tried their stuff in game two, but big hits including a monster homerun from Patterson over the left field fence proved too much to contain. Cottage Grove tallied its lone run on a rally in the third inning on a line drive single by Christian Spear that brought Logan Lowrey across the plate.

Lions Manager James Berry said that his team expects a steep learning curve this season.

"We're a young team with a lot of freshmen," Berry said. "We're still trying to piece things together to get better as a team, and we've got a lot to work on."

The Lions struggled again at Junction City this past Tuesday, dropping another Sky-Em League game to the Tigers, 16-1. They'll look to right the ship this Friday, in another doubleheader — this time against Marshfield.

First pitch is at 3 p.m.

3 Cheers for the LIONS!

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