

Brother Martin takes early lead, holds off Jesuit 13-8

Peter Steinbauer, The Times-Picayune
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A sloppy defensive play here or there can make a big difference in a baseball game.

That much was clear in Brother Martin's 13-8 victory against district-rival Jesuit on Saturday at Kirsch-Rooney Stadium.

The Crusaders (15-7, 3-1) scored seven runs in the first two innings, one in the fourth and five in the fifth. Brother Martin held a 13-3 lead through the top of the fifth before the Blue Jays (10-11, 2-2) scored five in the bottom half of the inning.

Facing Jesuit ace Brady Hadden, the Crusaders broke loose in the first two innings by capitalizing on several Jesuit miscues. Brother Martin's Myles Rodrigue hit a bases-loaded triple with two outs in the second inning when Jesuit right fielder Bubby Riley took a poor angle on the ball. Rodrigue then scored on an RBI single by Casey Rodrigue.

In the first inning, Brother Martin's first three hitters -- Sean McMullin, Christian Valetton and Logan Riddell -- reached and scored. Riddell had an RBI double and Casey Rodrigue had an RBI triple. Valetton reached on a bunt misplayed by Jesuit catcher Derek Dunham.

"We couldn't catch the ball and throw the ball, " Jesuit Coach Tim Parenton said. "They bunt a ball and we throw the ball to third base and don't catch it, he's safe. Instead of having an out, we've got men on first and third. Then they hit a ball in the outfield and we don't catch it. It's baseball, catch it, throw it, make the plays."

But that's not to say Brother Martin didn't do its part offensively. The Crusaders had 15 hits.

McMullin went 3-for-3 with a double, triple, home run, two walks and four runs scored. Riddell, who started on the mound, finished 3-for-5 with two doubles and three RBIs.

"We concentrated on getting good swings on Hadden, " Brother Martin Coach Mark Wisniewski said. "We did a good job of putting some good swings on it and we got five, six, seven hits in the first couple innings. It got us a lead and gave us a little breathing room to relax and play the game."

Hadden (1-1) was making his second start of the season after joining the team two weeks ago following Jesuit's playoff run in basketball. He pitched four innings, allowed seven earned runs on nine hits, struck out four and walked one.

While Brother Martin built its lead through the first four innings, Riddell (5-1) held the Jays to three runs on seven hits.

"You've got to get on top, get them in my count so they're swinging at my pitches, " said Riddell, who lasted through the fifth. "The ball was a little wet, it was hard to get my curve ball right. I fought through that and was trying to get them to swing at curveballs in the dirt so I could get ground balls."

Jesuit surged back in the fifth with five runs. Sophomore Armand Daigle drove in two runs with a triple. During the inning, Jesuit capitalized on a key error by Valetton on a ground ball.

Ethan Oddo led Jesuit, going 3-for-4 with three doubles. Dunham went 3-for-4 and Daigle finished 2-for-4.