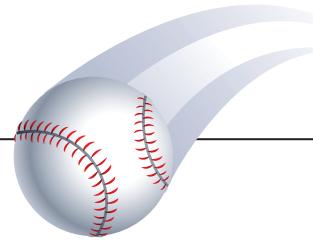


NEWS REPORT SPORTS



B1

Thursday,
June 6, 2013



Third place at state Teutopolis defeats Eureka, 7-0; finishes season 30-4

Damien Dennis
News Report Staff

PEORIA – The story of the weekend for the Teutopolis Wooden Shoes baseball team was their performance at the plate.

The Shoes managed to out-hit both opponents, but timely hitting was another issue.

In the first semifinal game, TTown collected eight hits, while holding Lisle to just four. But the Lions made them count, scoring twice in the third and then holding on for a 2-1 win.

It was a different story in the consolation game, as the Shoes banged out 11 hits, en route to a 7-0 shutout of Eureka and a third place finish in the Class 2A State Tournament.

"It's nice to end your season on a win," Teutopolis Head Coach Justin Fleener said. "Only a few teams in your class get to say that."

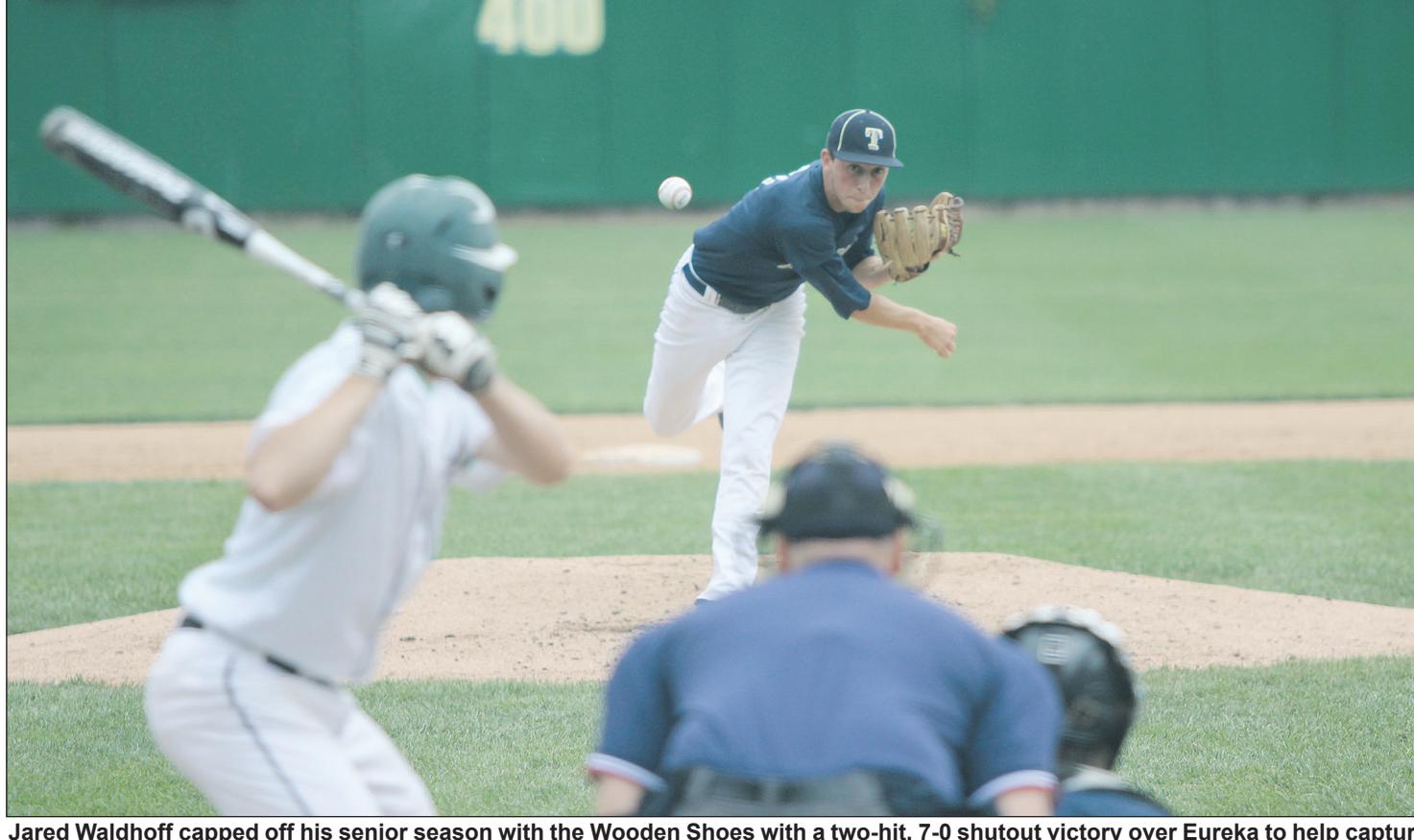
It was a special win for the Wooden Shoes in a couple ways, Fleener said during the postgame press conference. The team reached the 30-win mark for the fourth straight year and compiled a 126-18 record with this group of seniors during their high school career.

Pitcher Jared Waldhoff earned his ninth victory on the mound for the Wooden Shoes this year without a loss. He pitched all five innings of the game (due to bad weather, the game was only five innings instead of seven). The senior right-hander gave up just two hits and one walk, while striking out six batters. He threw 82 total pitches; 52 for strikes.

"Obviously, we wanted to be in that championship game," Waldhoff said. "But being a part of this senior class, we wanted to come in and go out on a win."

Chase Wendling came up big at the plate for the Wooden Shoes, going 3-for-3 with two RBI's and two runs scored. Fleener said that they counted on Wendling once they had a runner on base to go out and get the big hit to get ahead in the score.

"It was nice seeing that ball



Jared Waldhoff capped off his senior season with the Wooden Shoes with a two-hit, 7-0 shutout victory over Eureka to help capture the IHSA Class 2A third place crown. Waldhoff finished the season with a perfect 9-0 record on the mound.

News Report Photo/Damien Dennis

fall in the outfield grass when we needed that big hit," Fleener said. "It just wasn't falling yesterday. But the guys didn't let that get to them today. They came out and swung with aggressiveness."

Teutopolis started things off in the bottom of the first. With Bobby Wenthe at second and Wendling at third, Kyle Pruemer hit a line drive to left field to drive in the first run.

In the second, Reed Hardiek scored on a passed ball.

There was a rain delay halfway through the bottom of the third that seemed to stall Teutopolis' momentum, but only briefly.

The score remained 2-0 until the bottom of the fourth, when the Shoes put the game away with a five-run inning.

Derek Smith scored on a passed ball. Wendling then doubled to drive in both Cody Will and Hardiek and later scored on

a ground out by Ryan Ruholl. Justin Kenter then capped the inning with an RBI double.

Two strike outs and a ground out in the top of the fifth gave the Wooden Shoes the third place championship.

"I think the bats started going more," Fleener said. "Once again, we got that run in the first inning and got runners in position but couldn't get that big hit. The same thing happened in the second inning. And then when we had that rain delay, we had guys on first and second and popped up three times in a row."

Fleener said that they were high school kids under pressure to perform for their team, community and themselves, but they did a good job of fighting through that pressure.

"I wanted to get some of those other seniors in there," Fleener said. "I waited for the right opportunity and when they stepped up, they produced. I am

very thankful for the seniors and the loyalty they have given me."

"We should have switched things up with a different pitcher and given them a different look," Eureka Head Coach Dane Wear said about the rain delay. "Teutopolis is a good ball club and know how to swing the bats."

Teutopolis finished the 2013 baseball season with a 30-4 record.

Teutopolis falls to Lisle in semifinals, 2-1

The lack of timely hitting was a key factor in the 2-1 semifinal loss to Lisle.

The drama continued until the final inning.

Down by one run, Cody Will reached base on an error to start the seventh. Jared Waldhoff approached the plate next, looking to advance Will into scoring position. A bunt by Waldhoff

caught Lisle by surprise. He beat the throw to first, but the home plate umpire called him out for stepping on home plate.

"Well, coach told me before the inning that if Cody got on I was going to bunt, so I knew what I was going to do," Waldhoff said. "It was an outside pitch, so I had to reach for it. Obviously, I'm not going to say I hit home plate, but it's up to the umpire's decision. If that's what he calls, that's what he calls. We just have to take it."

The umpire stated that Waldhoff's foot hit home plate following the bunt.

Fleener said that the decision to call for a bunt came from how well Wenthe and Wendling were hitting in the weeks leading up to the semifinal game. He said he thought they would give them the better chance to even things up or steal the win.

Unfortunately, Wendling struck out and Wenthe flew

out to end the game, preventing the Shoes from going for a third state championship in four years.

Things looked bright in the bottom of the first inning. On just the second pitch, Waldhoff connected on a low pitch and sent it sailing over the left field fence to a home run and a quick 1-0 lead.

"It was a fastball and we knew he had some good off speed pitches," Waldhoff said. "He gave it to me. It was a good pitch, but I just made contact."

Waldhoff said that the home run didn't plant seeds of overconfidence in himself or his team to think they could run away with this. He said Lisle is a good team and he knew it would be close.

"It was exactly what we thought it was going to be like," Fleener said. "Sometimes the little things make a big difference and we just couldn't get that big hit when we needed it. We put guys on in scoring position, but couldn't get that hit, especially in the late innings."

Kyle Pruemer pitched an excellent game for the Shoes, giving up four hits and two runs across seven innings. He reached double digits in strikeouts with 10. Fleener said that he thought Pruemer had very good control on the mound.

The third inning ended up being the difference. An errant throw by Derek Smith allowed one runner to reach first base.

That runner eventually scored to tie the game and Kevin Copin then got a clutch two-out single to drive in what proved to be the winning run for the Lions.

"To come out there against one of the great teams and one of the perennial favorites in Teutopolis and win is a great thing," Lisle Head Coach Pete Meyer said.

Lisle went on to defeat Pleasant Plains in dominant fashion, 10-1, to take the IHSA Class 2A state championship.

"We never gave up and that's what every coach asks of every single one of his kids; to never give up," Fleener said.



(Top left) Jared Waldhoff attempts to bunt in the seventh inning against Lisle, but is called out due to touching home plate. (Top right) Darren Probst misses an overhead pass from Derek Smith at third base, giving the Lisle runner the opportunity to reach second and eventually score the tying run. (Bottom left) Head coach Justin Fleener speaks with his team before they take the field. (Bottom right) Fans piled in behind the Teutopolis dugout to cheer the Wooden Shoes as they looked for win number 30 for the fourth straight year.

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