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## Napoleon, Bryan moving on; Defiance's sectional title streak ends at 12

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Tim McDonough  
about 13 hours ago

By TIM McDONOUGH

[mcdonough@crescent-news.com](mailto:mcdonough@crescent-news.com)">[mcdonough@crescent-news.com](mailto:mcdonough@crescent-news.com)

For the first time in 13 seasons and for the first time in the Tom Held era, Defiance won't be playing in the district tournament.

A streak of 12 straight sectional titles fell by the wayside on Monday afternoon at Defiance's Booster Field as Austin Monnin and Art Warren

pitched Napoleon to a 3-0 Division II sectional crown over the Bulldogs in the opener. In the nightcap, Bryan's Matt Wisler outdueled Wauseon's Austin Bueter to lead the Golden Bears to a 4-2 sectional title victory over the Indians.

Napoleon (16-5) now advances to district action at Archbold on Thursday to face Toledo Central Catholic in the opener at 4:30 p.m., while Bryan (19-7) will have a rematch with Maumee in the nightcap on Thursday.

"I have no idea," commented Napoleon mentor Justin Firks when asked about the last time the Wildcats won a sectional title. "It's a special win no doubt about it. Defiance is the cream of the crop in this part of the state. We knew it was going to be a challenge, but it's a tribute to our kids for buying in to what we're trying to accomplish here."

In the opener, Defiance (19-4) never had the answer for the pitching duo of Monnin and Warren of Napoleon. Monnin, the lefty who started the game on Saturday, kept the Bulldogs off the scoreboard in his three innings of work, while Warren was unhittable in striking out nine and walking just one in finishing off the final four frames.

"Art competed. Big-time players make big-time plays and that's what Art did today and that's why he's going to Cincinnati," said Defiance coach Tom Held. "There's something about that delivery ... he's gets guys to swing at ball up here (upper chest), and you can't catch up to that pitch up there. I'll tell you what, he did a heck of a job."

Warren knew that he would pitch at some point in the contest, and was ready.

"I've been pumped up since we got rained out the other day, there was no way I was going to screw this up," Warren said. "We had the goal of winning the sectional right in front of us, and as a leader on this team I knew I had to step it up. Not only for my teammates, but for our fans too."

When the game resumed on Monday in the top of the third inning, Napoleon had Dylan Glass on second and Warren up with a 1-0 count and no outs. A ground-out by Warren moved Glass to third before Ryan Gilliland delivered a RBI single off Anthony Kidston.

In the bottom of the third inning and Napoleon in front 1-0, Defiance had runners at first and second with one out and Joe Gentile coming to the plate after an intentional walk to Kidston. Gentile hit a hard liner to Gilliland at short, but instead of catching the ball, Gilliland dropped it, picked it up, stepped on second and threw to first to get an inning-ending double play and kill any momentum by the home team.

"It was a smart play ... you talk to kids about plays like that, but they have to be able to do that in the heat of the moment and he did," Firks said. "That double play was huge, it took the wind out of their sails and kept momentum with us."

Held knew that play was a momentum killer for his club.

"They walked Anthony to get to Joe and if Joe comes up with a hit there, then it backfires and the momentum changes," Held said. "That play, momentum carried back to Napoleon. The bottom line is, they made a good play and they're a good team."

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A Tyler Miller solo shot in the top of the fourth made it a 2-0 lead for Napoleon, but Defiance threatened again in the bottom of the fourth.

A lead-off single by Kurt Belau, followed by a bloop single to right brought an end to the day for Monnin. Warren came in to face Gabe Vittorio, who put down a perfect sacrifice bunt to put runners at second and third with only one out. Warren, however, struck out Shea Murray and Jake Thomas to end the threat and keep his team in front.

“Warren was phenomenal. Today he went from being a thrower to a pitcher,” Firks said. “He didn’t have to show his high 80s fastball too much, just because of how well he was mixing his pitches. He really had Defiance off-balance, which is what you need to do to a good hitting team like that. I also have to credit Ross Huber because he called a great game behind the plate today.”

A RBI double by Monnin in the fifth that scored Warren finished off the scoring in the contest for the Wildcats. Those three runs were plenty though, with Defiance unable to threaten again in the 3-0 defeat.

“You want to win, obviously, but we as a coaching staff have to do a better job,” Held said. “I think our sectional is strong, that’s not an excuse, I think that’s a testament to northwest Ohio baseball. We have to take a look in the mirror and see what we need to do to separate ourselves.

“You win some, you lose some,” added Held. “We lost to a good team, and our kids battled and played their best and that’s all you can ask. I feel badly for the senior, but they have nothing to hang their heads about. They won the league, they kept the streak going and they did everything we asked. I have nothing but respect for those guys.”

In the nightcap, a passed ball led to Wauseon’s undoing as Bryan scored three runs in the bottom of the first inning after a strikeout and passed ball. Those three runs proved to be enough to hold off the Indians and punch a ticket to districts for the third straight year for the Golden Bears.

In the bottom of the first, Austin Bueter of Wauseon (17-6) struck out the first two Bryan batters before also striking out Trevor Blaylock. But on the K, the ball got underneath catcher Jake Trejo allowing Blaylock to reach base. After Blaylock stole second, Wisler connected on a double off the wall in center to give Bryan a quick 1-0 lead. One batter later Collin Bacon deposited a Bueter offering just over the fence in left, and just like that, the Bears were up 3-0.

“When you get a strikeout and a guy reaches base like that, it can be a killer and that’s what it proved to be,” said Wauseon coach Trent Thomas. “They took advantage of the opportunity. They got the double and the home run and obviously those were huge. They took advantage of a mistake we made, and that’s what great teams do.”

With Wisler coming in riding a 39 inning scoreless streak, many in attendance had to think that the game might be over after one inning, but that was far from the case.

In the top of the second Bueter, who had 12 Ks on the hill, connected on a RBI single to score Ty Suntken and just like that the scoreless streak was snapped and Wauseon was right back in the game. Bryan mentor Joe Roebuck admitted that he wasn’t comfortable the whole game against Wauseon, despite having his ace on the mound.

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“It’s been like that a lot where we score runs in the first, then nothing like it was today,” said Roebuck. “Austin Bueter did it to us after that first inning, he settled in and was good. Fortunately we had Bacon in there at the right time, he’s been crushing the ball lately, but I still never felt comfortable.

“They’re probably as good a hitting team against Wisler then we’ve seen all year,” added Roebuck. “They were scrappy up and down the lineup against Matt, even though he was great today. That’s why I never felt comfortable. The only time I felt comfortable was when we got that final out.”

After Bryan made it a 4-1 game in the sixth thanks to a Wauseon error that allowed Bacon to score, the Indians put a scare into Bryan and Wisler in the seventh.

A walk to Chase Rodriguez, Wisler’s only free pass of the night, a single by Bueter and a bloop single by Jodan Stickley loaded the bases with only one out. A Bryan error with two outs allowed pinch-runner Joe Spieles to score and cut the deficit to 4-2, but Wisler got Collin Bzovi to strike out on a 92 mile-per-hour fastball to end the contest.

“We had opportunities and one of our better hitters up there ... but Wisler got him with a pitch that was 92 miles per hour,” Thomas said. “To have the opportunity there was huge, to score two runs on that pitcher was huge. We just didn’t come through today against a great pitcher and a great team.”

Wisler knew Wauseon battled him, he was pleased to walk away with the victory.

“They came out with a good mindset of hitting me early and they did that,” concluded Wisler, who finished with 14 strikeouts. “I felt pretty good. It’s been like a week since I’ve thrown hard, but once I got loose I felt really good. When we got the lead, all I had to do was go out and throw strikes.”

#### Linescores

Napoleon 001 110 0 - 3 5 0

Defiance 000 000 0 - 0 5 0

Records: Napoleon 16-5, Defiance 19-4.

Winning pitcher: Austin Monnin (3 innings, 0 runs, 5 hits, 1 strikeout, 2 walks). Other: Art Warren.

Losing pitcher: Anthony Kidston (6 innings, 3 runs, 5 hits, 6 strikeouts, 5 walks). Other: Rob Zeigler.

Leading hitters (Napoleon, 5 hits) - Austin Monnin double; Tyler Miller single, home run; Dylan Glass double. (Defiance, 5 hits) - Austin Hancock single, double.

Wauseon 010 000 1 - 2 6 2

Bryan 300 001 x - 4 5 1

Records: Bryan 19-7, Wauseon 17-6.

Winning pitcher: Matt Wisler (7 innings, 2 runs, 14 strikeouts, 1 walk).

Losing pitcher: Austin Bueter (6 innings, 4 runs, 5 hits, 12 strikeouts, 4 walks).

Leading hitters: (Wauseon, 6 hits) - Jake Trejo 2 singles; Austin Bueter 2 singles. (Bryan, 5 hits) - Matt Wisler double; Collin Bacon single, home run; Derek Hug double.

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