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Kidston comes through in the clutch

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Tim McDonough
May 1, 2011

By TIM McDONOUGH

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SHAWNEE TOWNSHIP -- One pitch and one swing of the bat can change a baseball game. Anthony Kidston of Defiance proved that on Friday afternoon on the road at Lima Shawnee.

With the teams deadlocked at 0-0 entering the top of the seventh inning, Kidston led-off the frame by depositing a Trey Runneals curveball over the fence in right-center field to help lift the Bulldogs to a 1-0 victory over the Indians in their Western Buckeye League showdown.

The win was the 47th straight for Defiance (13-1, 6-0) in Western Buckeye League play, and it sent Shawnee (8-8, 3-3) to its third loss in the league.

The solo shot proved to be the only run of the game in a contest where Runneals and Defiance hurlers Kurt Belau and Kidston were engaged in an old-fashioned pitchers' duel.

"I wouldn't be lying if I told you I was thinking about going up there and dropping down a bunt," said Kidston. "It was in the back of my mind, but I got a curveball (on the first pitch of the at-bat) on the outside part of the plate and I just went with it to right field. The ball got up in the wind and went out."

The home run was the only blemish on an outstanding performance by Runneals, who allowed only three hits and no walks, while striking out five. During one stretch, the Shawnee righty set down 14 straight DHS batters.

"Runneals basically owned us today except for one at-bat," commented Defiance mentor Tom Held. "Wow, what a great high school baseball game."

Shawnee mentor Chad Spencer was also impressed with his No. 1 starter.

"I thought Trey had a masterful performance ... my hat is way off to that kid," Spencer said. "If he didn't out-pitch their kids, he pitched right there with them. I'm proud of him and, I'm proud of all our kids."

While Runneals was putting up zeros against Defiance until the seventh, so was Belau for the Bulldogs. The senior righty also got some help from his defense.

In the first inning the Indians had a runner reach second base only to be shut down, while in the second inning Shawnee had a runner reach third, only to be thwarted by Belau who came up with a ground out and back-to-back strikeouts to end that threat.

With one out in the bottom of the fourth inning, Dominic Crea reached on Defiance's only error of the day. With Bruce Roberts up, Crea took off on a hit-and-run play, but Defiance right fielder Mike Ramirez made a diving catch on a ball hit by Roberts and quickly threw to first to complete the 9-3 double play. That kept the game tied at 0-0.

"There was some very good defensive plays on both sides, but I thought the play of the game was Mike's diving catch on the ball hit by Roberts," Held said. "What a play to come up with that ball."

In the bottom of the sixth, Shawnee No. 9 hitter Sam Altenbach led-off with a bunt single just past Belau, before he was sacrificed to second by

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Clint Spencer. That's when Held turned to Kidston to relieve Belau, who went 5 1/3 innings and allowed two hits and one walk while striking out seven.

A ground-out to second by Brodey Williams advanced Altenbach to third with two outs, but Kidston got Cory Wilder swinging to end that threat and set the stage for the seventh inning.

"We tried to steal and bunt our way into situations where a timely hit could score a run for us," Spencer said. "We're not a team that's going to hit for power, we're a team that needs to get a runner to second or third and come up with a flair or a hard ground-ball up the middle. We just didn't get that done tonight."

After putting the run on the board in the seventh with his solo blast, Kidston finished off the Indians in the seventh by getting Crea to fly out to right, Roberts to ground out to second and Drew Biss swinging. That earned Kidston his fifth victory against no losses.

"Kurt Belau and Anthony Kidston pitched their tails off today too," said Held. "All three pitchers were ahead of hitters, they threw strikes and they didn't walk anybody. It was a just a great performance by all three of those guys on the mound today."

Said Belau: "My mindset was to just go out there and take it one pitch at a time, which is easy when I know I've got a great defense that's got my back. My curveball was really working well for me today and I was able to hit my spots which also helped. I knew it was only a matter of time before we scored."

After the tough loss, Spencer admitted that it came down to one pitch and one swing of the bat.

"Their kid came up with a big hit in a critical moment in a big WBL game ... one pitch and one swing made a big difference," concluded Spencer.

Linescore

Defiance 000 000 1 - 1 3 1

Shawnee 000 000 0 - 0 2 1

Records: Defiance 13-1 (6-0 WBL), Shawnee 8-8 (3-3 WBL).

Winning pitcher: Anthony Kidston (1 2/3 innings, 0 runs, 0 hits, 2 strikeouts, 0 walks). Other: Kurt Belau.

Losing pitcher: Trey Runneals (7 innings, 1 run, 3 hits, 5 strikeouts, 0 walks).

Leading hitters: (Defiance, 3 hits) - Anthony Kidston single, home run. (Shawnee, 2 hits) - Bruce Roberts double.

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