

PREP BASEBALL

Trojans build early lead over Red Oak, hold on for win

By Brian Rathjen
NT Sports Editor

RED OAK – The first inning has sometimes been a struggle for the Atlantic baseball team.

Not Thursday night. A three-run top-of-the-first inning against Red Oak in the Tigers’ American Legion ball-park provided a big boost for the Trojans and starting pitcher Jack Muller.

It went a long way toward a 7-5 victory in the final game of the 2025 Hawkeye Ten season at Red Oak, and continued to put the Trojans in position for a 10-win season. That can still happen given a win in Friday’s Iowa Class 3A substate baseball quarterfinal vs. Harlan. (The Trojans fell to Greene County 9-7 in the regular-season finale Monday night.)

Having those runs in his back pocket sure gave Muller a lift and helped him to relax, as all of his pitches were working.

“It’s a whole lot easier to pitch,” said Muller. “Less stress, really. If they get a run, you’re still up by two or three.”

Muller only struck out two Tigers, but the Trojan defense was relaxed and only had one error, a third-inning mishandle at first that ended up harmless, as in the end,



Brian Rathjen/NT Sports Editor

Brock Goodrich scores a run for Atlantic against Red Oak Thursday, July 3, at Red Oak.

the runner involved was thrown out in a basepaths rundown.

The Trojans built a 5-0 lead early on. Gavin McLaren’s single to shallow left scored Sawyer Tarrell for the first run, and a Tiger error at first played a role in Kale Jensen’s first run of the night. Brock Goodrich plated the first of his three runs on a sacrifice fly by Keston Schmitt.

Two more runs came in the third, the first Jensen’s home run shot that bounced off the scoreboard, and then the second Schmitt RBI to score Goodrich.

Red Oak got on the board in the bottom of the third on Carson Ro-

eder’s RBI single to center, but the Trojans’ No. 1 batter Hudson McLaren responded with two-out RBI double to restore a five-run edge at 6-1 in the fourth inning. After Red Oak scored another single run in the fifth, Petty drove in the Trojans’ final run in the fifth to make it 7-2.

“We have great hitters on our team,” said Muller, referring to Jensen’s home run and a trio of hits by Gavin McLaren. “Being able to hit the ball in the game was able to help us out.”

The Trojans got 10 hits on the night total, and it was that and their overall poise that went a long way toward the win,



Brian Rathjen/NT Sports Editor

Atlantic first baseman Grant Petty makes the scoop of the Red Oak grounder for an easy out Thursday, July 3, at Red Oak.

opined co-coach Gaylord Schelling.

“We need to score in the first inning because that puts pressure on them,” he said. “Red Oak likes to bunt, so now it’s 3-0, do you bunt? You may try it or may not. But (having the big lead) makes a big difference.

“And it gives Jack more confidence because we’ve got that big lead ... and he battled the whole night,” Schelling continued. “That’s one thing we’ve been working on ... hitting and competing and putting the ball in play. We hit the ball hard, and Kale with his home run has become a complete hitter.”

The Tigers scored two runs in the sixth and another in the seventh, the latter in the bottom of the seventh with one out. But Schmitt came on in a relief role and got the Tigers to pop out and ground to short to preserve the win.

“He’s a great reliever for our team. He never gets down on himself. He throws strikes and puts it in play and we make plays behind him,” said Muller.

This was Muller’s first win of the year on the hill, scattering nine hits and giving up just two walks on the night in arguably his best pitching performance of the season.

With the win comes

a season split with Red Oak. The last game, played a week ago at Atlantic, went nine innings and was a Red Oak winner, so it feels good to get the win back.

“The last game, I was disappointed ... in how it ended. Feels good to get back here and get a road win,” said Muller. “I just went up there and threw strikes, same as the last time.”

Schelling had the same thoughts.

“We had a great chance to win last time but didn’t,” he said. “I’m just happy with how the kids responded, and now we’ve got a long bus ride on Monday (to Greene County) and another chance to compete and win.”

GREENE COUNTY

The Trojans took that long bus ride to Jefferson Monday and came home with the 9-7 loss.

It was back and forth and tied going into the bottom of the seventh when the Rams scored the winning runs.

Gavin McLaren had three hits and two RBIs, and Jack Muller two hits to pace the nine-hit attack. Trojan pitching combined to give up 10 Rams hits but strike out five and walk just four.

Atlantic finishes the regular season at 9-15.



Matt Gengler/Harrison County Times-Reporter

Exira-EHK pitcher Alex Hansen gets between-inning advice from assistant coach Tyler Petersen during the Spartans’ game vs. Logan-Magnolia Monday, July 7, at Logan.

District

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seventh-inning bases-loaded flyball to right that sent Jackson Pfrang home for the win.

The Vikings scored the first two runs, coming in the first and third innings, before the Chargers tied the score in the bottom of the fifth with two runs.

Noah Kading and Colton Clark combined for the ACGC victory, giving up five hits with Kading striking out three and walking five and Clark in for the win. Aiden Akers went the full game for AHSTW, giving up four hits and three walks while striking out three.

ACGC (10-13) was set to play Woodbine in Tuesday’s district quarterfinal at Woodbine.

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