

Cumby wins in the Nick of time

Written by Don Wallace
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By DON WALLACE

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CUMBY — The Trojans came up with three runs, just in the Nick of time.

It was Nick Folsie's gap hit in the bottom of the seventh knocked in two runs giving Cumby a 4-3 win over Simms Bowie.

Game 1 of the Class 1A baseball bi-district playoffs was held at Cumby's Trojan Field Friday. The contest turned into a barn-burner and was not decided until Folsie's walk-off smash in the final inning.

"They (Simms Bowie) had lots of chances to score. We just had one, it happened to come in the bottom of the seventh. It helps to be the home team and have last bat," Scott Mabe, Cumby head baseball coach said with a wry grin. "We kept battling, this time the home team got with the win. It was a total team effort."

The final rally for Cumby just took five batters and 13 minutes for the team to pull off the comeback thriller. The Trojans trailed 3-1 with just three outs remaining as the long shadows started creeping onto the baseball diamond.

Left-handed starter Kolby Clark of Simms Bowie got himself in trouble to start the bottom of the seventh, walking Cumby's Noah Dyer on four pitches. Eric Wilson followed by ripping the first pitch he saw to left field for a single. The Pirates had a pow wow on the mound as Clark got instructions. He was left to battle on the bump.

Designated hitter Ryan Coleman of the Trojans was hit by a pitch on the foot as Cumby loaded the sacks. Elmer Rodriguez was retired on a fly ball in the infield, but during his at-bat Cumby's Dyer scored to make it a 3-2 game. Then with runners on first and second, the Trojans were determined to make something happen and pulled off a double steal, giving the home team to runners in scoring position with just one out. Folsie worked the count full, then squared up a fastball into the outfield gap between center and right field. The Trojans runners were off like a shot, both scoring and Folsie did not stop until he was mobbed at third base after the winning runs had scored.

Cumby celebrated the 4-3 win after not having much to cheer for in the first six frames of the game.

Folsie said, "I hit a fast ball. I just got a good one. I did it for coach."

Mabe said, "I am so proud Nick got that hit, he hasn't had many varsity at-bats, but he came through."

The game started under bright sunny skies with Clark on the mound for the Pirates, while Chase Vaughan toed the rubber for the Trojans.

Simms Bowie had a first inning rally to put two quick runs of the board. Rhett Wilkerson doing the damage with a sharp hit to left field that bounded by the fielder to allow a pair of runs to score. Vaughan regrouped and helped the cause with a diving stop for an out on the mound. Payton Gray of Simms Bowie went down on strikes, leaving a runner at third as the threat disappeared.

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Clark started to hit his stride on the mound. The Pirate southpaw had nine strikeouts for the game, three coming in the bottom of the second as he fanned three Trojans in order.

Simms Bowie had another possible rally when they got two runners in scoring position in the third. Vaughan worked out of the jam, he also tagged out a runner at the plate. Vaughan then got the final out with a strikeout. The Pirates left two stranded.

Cumby was retired in order in the bottom of the third as they continued to be shutout.

In the top of the fourth, Caige Croley doubled to left field. With Croley in motion, Clark laid down a bunt to the pitcher. Croley kept running on the play and while Clark was retired at first base, the Pirates snuck another run home and padded their advantage to 3-0. Vaughan ended the rally, striking out leadoff hitter Colton May.

The Trojans finally removed the goose egg from the scoreboard with a run in the bottom of the fourth. Dustin Heer pounded a 2-1 pitch to the centerfield fence and raced around the sacks for a triple. Anderson got the run home when his sharp shot to the outfield was misplayed. Cumby now trailed 3-1. The Trojans were unable to pad the lead as Dyer and Wilson were both retired on strikes.

The Trojans trailed 3-1 when they juggled the battery. Vaughan went from the mound to catch, while starting catcher Anderson took over on the hill in the top of the seventh.

Anderson pitched to five batters, allowing no runs, no hits, walking one as action shifted to the bottom of the seventh.

Cumby scored twice off a walk, hitter batter, two hits to send the Trojans into the second game of the playoffs up 1-0.

Vaughan pitched to 27 batters, allowing three runs, five hits, striking out four, walking two and hitting one batter.

Losing pitcher was Clark. He struck out nine, facing 27 batters, giving up four runs, four hits, walking one, hitting one batter.

"We knew their left-hander (Clark) would be tough," Mabe said. "Our pitchers did well. Vaughan and Anderson pitched very well and kept us in the game."

Mabe said, "We are going to think good thoughts for a while, being up 1-0. We now have to play at their place. They need to win two games, we just have to win one."

Game 2 is Saturday at 1 p.m. at Simms Bowie. The third game, if necessary, will be at the same location.