

SPORTS

MEN'S BASEBALL

Voyageurs split 2-2 in weekend twin bills

RRCC now 5-9

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

The Rainy River Community College baseball team found playable field conditions last weekend in Mitchell, S.D. and ended up splitting a pair of double-headers.

The Voyageurs opened action Saturday with a 5-3 loss to Northland Community and Technical College.

RRCC's Gino Strebing recorded the pitching loss. He pitched 4 2/3 innings, allowing all five runs, one earned, on six hits with five walks and two hit batters while striking out nine.

The Voyageurs scored all their runs in the final two innings and tallied four hits over seven innings with Talon Kunkel doubling for the team's only multiple-base hit.

Each team ended up with four errors apiece.

RRCC 16, NORTHLAND 5

The Voyageurs erupted for nine runs in the sixth inning when they closed out Saturday's action with a 16-5 win over Northland in six innings.

RRCC chased Northland starting and losing pitcher Colten Anderson off the mound in the sixth inning after he gave up 10 runs, seven earned, on 10 hits with six walks while striking out seven.

Of the Voyageurs' 15 hits, Colten Boudreau had four of them, including a double. Strebing added three hits, including a double. One of Kunkel's two hits was a double, while Drew Birss



Gino Strebing



Makana Canda

and Tanner Helms each had two singles.

Stephen Rivera recorded the pitching victory for RRCC in two innings of work, allowing an earned run on a hit with a walk and a hit batter while striking out three.

Northland committed five errors, compared to one for the Voyageurs.

RRCC 1, D. WESLEYAN 0

The Voyageurs scored only one run in their first game Sunday when they defeated the Dakota Wesleyan junior varsity, 1-0.

Kunkel recorded the victory after pitching six scoreless innings, allowing two hits with two walks and a hit batter while striking out five. Helms got credit for a save when he pitched in the seventh inning without giving up a hit or a walk facing four batters.

Of RRCC's three hits, two were doubles by Strebing, who scored in the second inning after being batted in by Victor Rodriguez.

Strebing, who batted .500 (5-10) last weekend and led the team in every offensive category, has been named the Minnesota College Athletic Conference's Northern Division Player of the Week.

NORTHLAND 9, RRCC 1

The Voyageurs lost their

final game Sunday against Northland, 9-1.

RRCC's only run came in the bottom of the first when Boudreau scored. Of the Voyageurs' six hits, Makana Canda had a pair of singles while Helms doubled for the team's only multiple-base hit.

Robert Parrish III recorded the pitching loss for RRCC after working the first 3 2/3 innings, allowing five runs, three earned, on three hits with four walks while striking out five.

Following the 2-2 weekend split, the Voyageurs' season record now stands at 5-9.

RRCC is scheduled to return to action this coming Saturday and Sunday with games against St. Cloud, Itasca, and Anoka-Ramsey at a location to be announced.

Saturday's Game 1
Northland 5, Rainy River 3
Northland 2-0-1 0-2-0 0 - 5 6 4
Rainy River 0-0-0 0-0-1 2 - 3 4 4
WP-Nick Hoffard; LP-Gino Strebing

Saturday's Game 2
Rainy River 16, Northland 5
Rainy River 2-0-5 0-0-9 - 16 15 1
Northland 1-1-0 0-1-2 - 5 6 5
WP-Stephen Rivera; LP-Colten Anderson

Sunday's Game 1
Rainy River 1, D. Wesleyan 0
Rainy River 0-1-0 0-0-0 0 - 1 3 2
D. Wesleyan 0-0-0 0-0-0 0 - 0 2 0
WP - Talon Kunkel; LP - E. Saxon

Sunday's Game 2
Northland 9, RRCC 1
Northland 0-0-0 5-2-0 2 - 9 7 0
Rainy River 1-0-0 0-0-0 - 1 6 1
WP - Brady Brooks; LP - Robert Parrish III

WOMEN'S SOFTBALL

Voyageurs go 3-1 at Crossover Tourney

RRCC now 9-4

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

Snow-covered fields in much of Minnesota didn't prevent the Rainy River Community College softball team from winning three of four games inside last weekend at the Rosemount Irish Dome.

"We had an excellent weekend," said RRCC head coach Dieter Humbert. "Our bats came to life."

The Voyageurs opened the Crossover Tourney on Friday afternoon with an 8-1 victory over Fergus Falls, a team RRCC lost to a week earlier at the Irish Dome.

Oashaja Dobie recorded the complete-game pitching victory for the Voyageurs, allowing an unearned run on two hits with a walk while striking out 10 over seven innings.

"She took her pitching up another level," Humbert said.

Of RRCC's nine hits, Rachel Clark and Megan Johnson both doubled and singled. Alexis Fancy added two singles. Alisha Brinker homered and drove in three runs, while Dobie added a double.

RRCC 2, ROCHESTER 1

The Voyageurs won their second game Friday by scoring twice in the bottom of the seventh to defeat Rochester, 2-1.

RRCC put the tying run in scoring position on a ground-rule double by Courtney Branham, who scored after Rachel Clark tripled. Andrea Barylski then singled to drive in Clark for the winning run.

Branham accounted for two of the Voyageurs' six hits with a double and a single.



Oashaja Dobie



Alisha Brinker



Andrea Barylski



Rachel Clark

Dobie threw all seven innings to pick up the pitching victory, allowing an earned run on four hits with four walks while striking out nine.

RRCC 15, RIVERLAND 4

The Voyageurs played two more games Saturday, winning the first contest over Riverland, 15-4, in five innings.

"Our bats really were alive there," said Humbert, who noted the team had 15 hits, seven of which were doubles.

Branham and Dobie each had two singles and a double. Lynsi Emery added two doubles. Clark and Fancy both doubled and singled. Rebecca Dillely also had a double.

Dobie allowed four unearned runs on four hits with a walk while striking out three for her third pitching victory of the tournament.

RRCC committed six errors for the game.

DAWSON 10, RRCC 7

The Voyageurs led 7-3 after four innings in their final game Friday, but ended up losing to an NJCAA Division II school, Dawson, 10-7.

Dobie picked up the pitching loss, allowing all 10 runs, one earned, on 10 hits with four walks while striking out eight.

In the field, RRCC committed six errors.

Of the Voyageurs' seven

hits, Clark and Dobie both doubled and singled while Branham hit a three-run homer and Barylski also doubled.

RRCC's season record now stands at 9-4 after two weeks of games at the Irish Dome to open the season.

Dobie leads the Voyageurs in both hitting and pitching. For the season, Dobie is batting 20-37 with a .541 average, also tallying eight doubles and a home run with 9 RBI. Her pitching record is 8-4 with a 1.77 ERA, having allowed 64 hits with 28 walks while striking out 94 over 75 innings.

After the first nine games of the season March 19-21 at the Irish Dome, Dobie had been named the Minnesota College Athletic Conference's Northern Division Pitcher of the Week.

Brinker leads RRCC with 17 RBI and three home runs.

The Voyageurs' first outdoor games of the season at Vermilion aren't scheduled until April 12, but Humbert said the team is trying to schedule another doubleheader Friday at the Irish Dome against Central Lakes, so that RRCC wouldn't have to go two weeks without playing again.

The Voyageurs' home doubleheader initially set for next week against Northland is being rescheduled.

SIJHL HOCKEY

Lakers take 2-0 semifinal series lead over English River

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

The Fort Frances Lakers are halfway to winning their Superior International Junior Hockey League semifinal series after a pair of home victories over the English River Miners last weekend.

The top-seeded Lakers got four goals from three different skaters, along with 23 saves from Devin Tappenden, to top the visiting Miners, 4-1, in the series opener Friday night at Ice for Kids Arena.

After a scoreless opening

period, the Lakers tallied the first goal when Miles Nolan scored on a power play at 9:07 of the second period.

Fort Frances extended its lead just over six minutes later when Lakers defenseman Cody Wickstrom scored his first goal of the postseason, assisted by Falls native Mason Meyer, making it 2-0 through two periods of play.

Nolan connected on the man advantage early in the final frame to put Fort Frances up by three while Bryson Jasper had an attempt towards the net deflect off him and in to make it a 4-0 game

with 11:39 to go.

English River got on the board at 13:05 of the final period when Taylor Bargar ripped a shot from the right point during a man advantage that eluded Tappenden and snapped his shutout bid while also ending a goalless streak at 116 minutes and 26 seconds.

Greg Harney faced 34



Mason Meyer

shots in a losing cause for the Miners.

LAKERS 4, MINERS 3

Cameron Jackson's low point blast 5:36 into the third period turned out to be the game-winner Saturday night when the Lakers edged the Miners, 4-3, at Ice for Kids Arena.

Fort Frances now leads the best-of-seven series 2-0 as it heads to Ear Falls for games 3 and 4 Thursday and Friday at 7 p.m.

Devin Vander Wyk opened the scoring to put the Miners in front 4:02 into the contest. Fort Frances pulled even

at 14:09 of the opening period when Nolan fired in the equalizer from close range.

The Lakers struck short-handed later in the period when Lyndon Lipinski was sent in along on a breakaway and made no mistake as he went high glove side on P.D. Melgoza in the Miners' net.

English River then tied it on the same power play they gave up the lead on as Chris Hrabec buried one from the slot past Tappenden.

The Miners went back on top early in the second period when Dominic Blouin scored his third goal of the

playoffs at 1:14.

Fort Frances pulled even on the power play at 10:50 of the second period when Tanner Fricke teed up a shot for Kyle Lipinski, who wired the puck past Melgoza from the right faceoff circle.

Jackson's game-winner came when a Lakers' shot from the left point hit a defender in front and changed direction before slowly sliding in past Melgoza.

Tappenden finished with 26 stops to record the victory for Fort Frances, which fired 48 shots on Melgoza in the English River net.

Ex-Viking Jared Allen settles in with Bears

LAKE FOREST, Ill. (AP) — Defensive end Jared Allen turns 32 this week. He wants nothing to do with the idea of becoming a situational pass rusher as a 30-something Chicago Bear.

Allen plans to play as many snaps as possible at the right defensive end spot he played the previous 10 years for the Minnesota Vikings and Kansas City Chiefs, with the hope of turning around a defense that dropped from third to 30th in scoring last season.

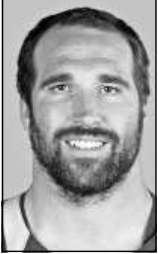
"It's just, I have a lot left in this tank," Allen said Monday during his first visit to Halas Hall. "My body feels good. And again, I feel like I can make waves. And not for me, personally. I want to win a Super Bowl."

Allen decided against possibly joining forces with the Super Bowl champion Seattle Seahawks to take a four-year contract for a reported \$32 million with the Bears, a move viewed by some as one of NFL free agency's biggest surprises.

"What attracted me here is the opportunity to go out and win it, to earn it and win it and be a part of it and be a piece of that puzzle," Allen said. "And again, like I've always said, things have to line up. It has to be the right place, great for my family. Obviously, you want a fair contract throughout the whole deal. And everything lined up."

Allen will line up with defense completely rebuilt at end since last year and said he'll enjoy playing alongside former Dallas Cowboys defensive tackle Jeremiah Ratliff, who the Bears signed during the 2013 season after he recovered from a groin tear.

"We're going to be a vaunted Bears defense again, and it's going to start with us up front, it's going to start with that front



Jared Allen

seven," Allen said.

Allen takes a position Julius Peppers had last year before being cut by the Bears for salary cap purposes. He joins former Oakland Raider Lamarr Houston and former Detroit Lion Willie Young as part of the Bears' new-look defensive end group. The Bears had only 17 sacks from defensive ends last year and as a team tied the Jacksonville Jaguars for last in sacks with 31.

Yet Allen said it's not all about the pass rush for him.

"Everybody thinks that defensive ends and D-line, all you want to do is rush the passer," he said. "Well, I come from a long line of thinking that you have to earn the right to rush the passer. We're going to get after it in the run game."

Bears general manager Phil Emery said he isn't worried about Allen being slower at Soldier Field than he was on the artificial turf of the Metrodome.

"I think I saw the stat that he's had 27 sacks in his

last 28 games on (grass), so I'm not concerned," Emery said. "I saw him sack us on our field ... I think the surface doesn't really matter to him because of his high-level instincts, his ability to rush the passer, his use of his length, his leverage, his toughness. He is a physical player and a high-motor player, so I don't think surface matters."

Allen's positive outlook are factors the Bears considered when they pursued him.

"I think he's got a great blend of energy, just love for the game, almost a boyish love for the game and maturity," Emery said. "Any locker room can use that and the Chicago Bears certainly can use that."

Coming to Chicago will be a change in culture for Allen, who grew up on a ranch in Morgan Hill, Calif.

"I'm not a big fan of cities, I grew up on a horse ranch," he said. "But I've always liked Chicago. For some reason it makes sense."

MEN'S HOCKEY

Minnesota advances to Division I Frozen Four

ST. PAUL (AP) — Justin Kloos made sure Minnesota didn't waste its chance to face one of its oldest rivals on the game's biggest stage.

Kloos scored twice and Adam Wilcox made 24 saves to help the top-seeded Gophers beat St. Cloud State 4-0 on Sunday night in the NCAA West Regional final.

Minnesota (27-6-6) will face North Dakota in the Frozen Four semifinals in Philadelphia on April 10. Boston College will play Union in the other semifinal.

The Minnesota-North Dakota rivalry dates to 1930. Before this year, the last time the two former WCHA foes hadn't met in the regular season was 1946-47.

The Gophers left the conference and won the inaugural Big Ten title this season, while North Dakota finished second in the

new NCHC, then slipped into the tournament as a No. 4 seed in the Midwest Region.

"I almost had a kind of inkling about it once North Dakota won (Saturday)," Minnesota coach Don Lucia said. "It's like, 'I guess we have to win now, because we can't go a year without playing.'"

The Gophers are making their third trip to the Frozen Four since winning national titles in 2002 and 2003. They lost to North Dakota in the semifinals in 2005 and fell to Boston College in the semis two years ago. This year's bracket gives them a chance to avenge both of those defeats.

"Going to the Frozen Four, it never gets old. It's a thrill," Lucia said. "To be able to come back this year and get back to Philadelphia, it's a real credit to our group of guys."