

SPORTS

SECTION 7AA BOYS BASEBALL TOURNAMENT

Broncos' season ends in opening-round loss to Eveleth-Gilbert

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

A year after making it to the Section 7AA championship game, the International Falls baseball team wasn't able to get out of the tournament's opening round.

The No. 3-seeded Broncos' season came to an end Tuesday after they opened the tournament in Ely and lost to No. 6-seeded Eveleth-Gilbert, 4-3.

"We just failed to execute a couple of things," said Falls head coach Eric Walls, who also noted the Broncos' prospects looked good to win when they entered the seventh inning with the lead to face the bottom of the Golden Bears' batting order.

The game had been tied at 2-2 after three innings, before the Falls scored a run in the bottom of the sixth to pull in front.

Broncos pitcher Ben Humbert struck out the

first Eveleth-Gilbert batter in the seventh inning, before the next batter reached base on a single. Walls noted the Falls had an opportunity to record the second out of the inning on a sacrifice bunt attempt to advance the runner, but all were safe after a throwing error. The Golden Bears ended up scoring twice before the side was retired.

The Falls then couldn't plate a run in its half of the inning when the game and season ended for the Broncos.

Humbert struck out 10 batters and allowed six hits, pitching all seven innings in a losing effort.

The Golden Bears' Levi Paskett recorded the pitching victory after allowing five hits and striking out nine over seven innings.

Eveleth-Gilbert's Sam Roberts had the only multi-hit day in the game with a pair of hits.

The Broncos finished



FILE PHOTO

The Broncos' Ben Humbert (44), shown delivering a pitch in last month's regular-season opener against Hibbing, threw 10 strikeouts Tuesday in Falls' Section 7AA Tournament opening-round loss against Eveleth-Gilbert.

the season with an overall record of 9-7. The Golden Bears advanced to the double-elimination portion of the tournament, where they won their next game Tuesday evening over No. 2-seeded Greenway, 7-2.

Last year's Section 7AA champion, top-seeded Her-

mantown, was knocked out of the tournament Tuesday when the Hawks were upset in the opening round by No. 8-seeded Duluth Marshall, 3-2.

E-G 4, IF 3
E-G 1-0-1 0-0-0 2-4 62
IF 1-0-1 0-0-1 0-3 53

Falls to field Legion baseball team this summer

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

For the first time in several years, International Falls will be fielding a Legion baseball team this summer.

Bronco head baseball coach Eric Walls, who also coached Falls' VFW baseball team that won a district championship last summer, said he will be involved this summer in coaching the Legion team along with Jay Bartkowski and Dieter Humbert, while Mike Coffield will take over as the VFW team's head coach.

Walls said most of the players on last year's VFW

baseball team won't be able to re-join the team this year because of the age cutoff. Players as old as 19 will be allowed to play Legion baseball, which could also include the younger players eligible to play VFW baseball, as well as those who graduated from high school a year ago.

For instance, he noted 2013 FHS graduates Caleb Dahlin and Gunnar Ander-



Eric Walls

son, who were captains a year ago on the Bronco baseball team, would be allowed to play for Falls' Legion team this summer. Dahlin played Legion baseball last year in Hibbing.

Based on the size of the "home school" where Falls' Legion team would draw its players, which could also include a couple of players from Littlefork-Big Falls, Walls said the Falls will play in a Division 2 conference of nine teams that will also include Ely, Moose Lake, Cook County, Two Harbors, Taconite (Greenway), Brookston, Esko and Deer River.

Though this summer's schedule is still being finalized, he said each team in the conference will end up playing each other twice, besides having tournaments, with the first game expected to take place the week of June 16 after the state high school baseball tournament concludes.

Walls said he expects Falls' Legion team will travel more than play at home this summer because of just forming this year. So far there is only one home game finalized on its schedule for June 30 against Deer River.

SECTION 7A GIRLS SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT

L-BF Vikings earn rematch with Cherry Tigers for title

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

After losing Tuesday to the defending Section 7A champions, the Littlefork-Big Falls softball team earned a rematch with Cherry to play for the title when the Vikings won a losers' bracket game later that afternoon over Greenway.

L-BF took a 6-0 lead after three innings, then gave up 10 runs before pulling out an 11-10 victory over the Raiders in eight innings.

The Vikings scored their first two runs in the bottom of the first when Brooke Millerbernd hit a solo home run, DyAna Imhof doubled



Brooke Millerbernd



DyAna Imhof

and Amanda Nelson singled to drive in Imhof.

In the bottom of the second, a Greenway error in the outfield led to two L-BF runs.

The Vikings added two more runs in the third inning on an RBI double by Breann Larson and Katie

Fort grounding out to drive in another run.

The Raiders got on the scoreboard with a run in the top of the fourth and then took the lead by scoring six times in the fifth inning, before adding three more runs in the sixth as fielding miscues hurt L-BF.

"We lost our train of thought and we just forgot how to field the ball," Vikings head coach Mike Imhof said.

L-BF pulled within a run by scoring three times in the bottom of the sixth when Ellie Julson had one of her three hits and DyAna Imhof recorded her second double

of the game.

Kate Knaeble, who came in to play late in the game for the Vikings, had a role in L-BF's tying and winning runs when she scored in the bottom of the seventh to force extra innings, and then hit an infield grounder that scored Nelson for the victory in the bottom of the eighth.

Millerbernd, who pitched in L-BF's first five tournament games, threw all eight innings to record the victory against Greenway.

"Brooke pitched her butt off," Mike Imhof said.

The win resulted in the same two teams playing for the Section 7A championship.

SECTION 7A BOYS BASEBALL TOURNAMENT

Vikings conquer Giants, Spartans in Hibbing

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

Two of the higher-seeded teams fell Tuesday in Hibbing, where the No. 7-seeded Littlefork-Big Falls baseball team extended its postseason winning streak in the Section 7A Tournament to three games.

The Vikings advanced to the double-elimination portion of the tournament by first winning over No. 2-seeded Mesabi East, 8-4, in eight innings.

The game was tied at 4-4 after five innings before the Vikings rallied for four runs in the top of the eighth and the Giants couldn't score in their half of the inning.

Of L-BF's four hits, Tommy Manninen and Eric Thydean each had a double. Manninen also ended up with 4 RBI with Thydean driving in a pair of runs.

Though the Vikings struck out 15 times over eight innings, they also got 11 free passes on base - seven walks and four hit batters.

The Vikings started Rylan Henrikson on the mound. Henrikson pitched the first 4 2/3 innings, allowing all four runs, two earned, and all seven hits while striking out a batter.

Taylor DeLack pitched the final 3 1/3 innings when he recorded the pitching victory with Mesabi East unable to generate a run or a hit and also striking out three times.

L-BF 4, N-K 1

The Vikings won their final game Tuesday by defeating No. 3-seeded Nashwauk-Keewatin, 4-1.

After both teams each tallied a run in the opening inning, L-BF did the rest of the scoring, breaking the tie by scoring once in the top of the fifth and adding two insurance runs in the sixth inning.

The Vikings recorded eight hits with Darian Erickson accounting for three of them with two doubles and a single, while Tate Promersberger added two singles.

Henrickson pitched all seven innings to record the victory, allowing an earned run on six hits while striking out six.

L-BF not only scored more runs Tuesday than its two opponents, the Vikings also missed out on more scoring opportunities, leaving 21 runners on base over both games, compared to 11 for the opposition.

Tuesday's two wins advanced L-BF to the winners' bracket game Thursday in Proctor against top-seeded Barnum.

Game 1
L-BF 8, ME 4 (8 innings)
L-BF 0-0-2 0-2-0 0-4-8 47
ME 1-1-0 1-1-0 0-0-4 74

Game 2
L-BF 4, N-K 1
L-BF 1-0-0 0-1-2 0-4 83
N-K 1-0-0 0-0-0 0-1 63



FILE PHOTO

The Vikings' Taylor DeLack (2), shown delivering a pitch in last month's regular-season home game against Mesabi East, recorded the pitching victory in Tuesday's Section 7A Tournament game against the Giants.

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