



Cat centerfielder Barry Milligan jogs back into third base, beating the throw, during the Class 4-1A State Tournament

First-Round Loss

Wildcat Baseballers Stopped In Class 4-1A State Crown Chase

The clutch hits were left in the bats for next year and so were the big plays on defense. Mulvane's first trip to the State Baseball Tournament was a short-lived one Friday, May 21, as Kansas City Sumner dodged bullets all day to eliminate Mulvane's Wildcats, 12-3, in a first-round game in the Class 4-3-2-1A State Baseball Tournament held at Soden's Grove in Emporia.

Coach Don Gifford's Cats had runners on in every inning, mostly thanks to seven walks, but left runners on in every inning except the seventh, when a doubleplay ended the game and pushed the Sabers into the semifinals against eventual champion Silver Lake.

Silver Lake clipped defending champion Thomas More Prep, 2-0, for the state title. Sumner went on after losing, 7-3, to Silver Lake, to take third place by waxing Baxter Springs, 7-3.

"It was good to go," confessed Gifford, who guided the Wildcats to a 10-12 record in their first year of high school ball. "It was good for the whole program's sake, plus if we expect to be back next year, it'll give us that much more playoff experience. With six juniors and one sophomore, I certainly hope to be back next season."

The Sumner Sabers also threatened in every inning except the first, when Cat righthander Robert Turner set them down in order. They scored three in the second by hitting the ball out of the infield only once, added another run in the third when MHS right fielder Darrin Faris misplayed a fly into a triple and locked things up with three more in the third with the help of two Mulvane errors.

"We went out tense, tight and not well organized," said Gifford. "I guess you call those the playoff jitters in the pros. We didn't play a good game. We couldn't get the key hit and that's been a bugaboo for us. I'm hoping next year to have that fixed. We're coming back, though, and I feel the boys know how close they came and that will spur them on."

Mulvane scored in the first inning to take a 1-0 lead, the only lead for the Cats. Shortstop Allen Whitmer walked to start the game and was sacrificed to

CLASS 4-1A STATE BASEBALL AT EMPORIA First Round

Kansas City Sumner	031 303 2-12 13
Mulvane	101 010 0- 3 4

Todd Knackstedt, Barry Wesselowski 7, and Mike Jones; Robert Turner, Chris Hicks 5, and J.C. Shook.

Silver Lake 3, Sedan 2
Thomas More Prep 3, Thayer 1
Baxter Springs 5, Burlington 3

Semifinals

Silver Lake 7, Kansas City Sumner 3
Thomas More Prep 8, Baxter Springs 4

Third Place

Kansas City Sumner 7, Baxter Springs 3

First Place

Silver Lake 2, Thomas More Prep 0

second. Senior Vic Marcelle drilled a single to score Whitmer.

Sumner, which was 12-4 at game-time, grabbed the lead with some luck in the second inning. A swinging bunt went for a single when Shook slipped on a muddy spot on the infield. Turner walked the next batter and the third hitter topped the ball in front of the plate but Shook threw the ball into left field trying to get the runner at third and two runs scored. A single to center was Sumner's only legitimate hit and scored the third run.

The Cats had a golden opportunity to match the Sabers' three runs in the top of the second when Shook reached on an error and Faris walked. Whitmer also drew a two-out walk to load the bases before the Sumner shortstop made a diving snag of a Todd Robinson grounder between short and third, got to his knees and threw out Whitmer at second. A chance for at least two runs was snuffed.

"That was a heck of a play by their shortstop," said Gifford. "When you're players are making that kind of plays, you know you're in the state playoffs."

"We had some dandy plays, too. Barry (Milligan) made a couple outstanding plays in center and (senior) Dale Landes had a couple of hits and played well in the pressure."

A two-out Landes single in the third scored the Cats second run and made the score 4-2. Milligan walked and went to second on a Chris Hicks ground out.

The only other MHS damage came in the fifth when Milligan again walked and went to third on a Landes base knock. Milligan sprinted home to score on a wild pitch.