

Cats At Rose Hill Today

Bats Waterlogged At Valley

Nobody said it would be easy, and Don Gifford and his Mulvane Wildcat baseball players found out it had just gotten a little harder.

That realization was discovered Monday night, April 11, following a doubleheader sweep by Valley Center over the Wildcats--those same Wildcats who were among the Walter Johnson League upper echelon in pre-season guesswork. The Hornets had their stingers up and toppled Mulvane, 3-1, in the opener and 5-4 in the nightcap.

The twin setbacks saw Mulvane's record dip to 1-2 overall and 0-2 in the league.

"It puts a crimp in our league championship hopes, that's for sure," said a disappointed Gifford. "The thing that really hurt us, I believe, is that we had to sit on that victory over Campus for two weeks. And we got better and better every day without going out to practice."

The double loss at Valley Center should deflate those thoughts considerably.

Gifford was at a loss for the lack of Cat power, a strength on the squad last year and seven of those starters are returning. "We haven't played for a while and the weather hasn't helped but we did more hitting than fielding indoors," said Gifford. "The kids were off-balance all night. We got frustrated and when you get frustrated, you start pressing."

Gifford also took ax credit for the first loss, after the Hornets scored twice in the second inning on a double-steal and a balk that followed. "He (the Valley Center) just out-coached me, that's for sure," said Gifford. "He knows his stuff and pulled some things that we hadn't worked on and got me."

Righthander Chris Hicks, a senior, pitched a fairly decent ball game in the opener for MHS. He fanned nine and walked three, giving up four hits. However, he balked in the eventual winning run when a Valley runner broke for home on a steal attempt designed to draw a balk.

First Game
Mulvane 000 010 0-1 3
Valley Center 020 001 x-3 4
Chris Hicks and Doug Ford; Joe Morris, Brian Lesperance 5, and Steve Wright.

Second Game
Mulvane 201 10-4 3
Valley Center 021 02-5 5
Robert Turner and Doug Ford; Steve Wright, Brian Lesperance 4, and Mark Kennedy, Wright 4.

Mulvane blew an opportunity in the opener to take the upper hand when seniors Barry Milligan, Todd Robinson and Allen Whitmer all reached base with one out. Two strikeouts, however, ended that threat.

The Cats' lone run in the fifth came off the bat of junior outfielder Terry Reusser, who drove in Darrin Faris with a one-out rope to centerfield. Faris had reached on a walk. It was only one of three hits for Mulvane, the other two coming off the bats of Milligan in the first and Hicks in the seventh, which led to Faris being gunned down at the plate trying to score from second base to end the game.

The Wildcat bats were humming a little more in the second game, only

three safeties again, to back the five-hit hurling of senior righthander Robert Turner.

Mulvane scored twice in the opening frame as Milligan and Robinson walked and both scored when junior Pat Sellers lined a two-out double to center.

After the Hornets had tied it in the second, Mulvane came back with another run in the third and fourth in the fourth. Milligan, who walked three times in the game, did his thing, then stole second and scored on a fly out by Hicks in the 4th. A bases-loaded walk to Whitmer forced in senior catcher Doug Ford, who had singled.

The next outings for the Wildcats will be today (April 14) with a doubleheader at Rose Hill, the games starting at 3:30 p.m. Saturday, April 16, the Cats will travel to Bishop Carroll for a 1 p.m. doubleheader in a make-up match. Monday, the Cats will be at home hosting Augusta in a 4 p.m. doubleheader and Wednesday, Mulvane is at Goddard in another make-up game, slated to start at 4.



Cat coach Don Gifford, Doug Ford talk strategy at Valley