

Argylls pound Blackford to stay perfect in CIC

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Madison-Grant's (from left) Chad Harbert, Nick Evans, Mason Richards and Cole Hasty receive the traveling CIC home plate trophy from Blackford players after the Argylls' 16-1 win over the Bruins Tuesday in Fairmount. Scott Hunt / shunt@chronicle-tribune.com



Madison-Grant's Mason Richards trots to third base after slugging a 2-run homer as part of an 11-run fourth inning in the Argylls' 16-1 win over Blackford on Tuesday. Scott Hunt/shunt@chronicle-tribune.com

FAIRMOUNT — Madison-Grant took another step towards winning the Central Indiana Conference baseball championship Tuesday night and did so in emphatic fashion against visiting Blackford.

The Argylls nearly batted through their lineup twice in the bottom of the fourth inning and used the 11-run frame to gain total control in a 16-1 win over the Bruins. The win not only moved M-G to 5-0 in league play, but it also gave the Argylls possession of the traveling CIC home plate trophy for the first time in recent memory.

“To be honest with you, I’ve never seen that plate, so it’s a good thing to have,” said Argylls coach Scott Haley. “Sitting on top of the conference right now is a good feeling. These kids have worked hard and they want it.”

The first order of M-G’s business comes Thursday when Mississinewa comes to Fairmount. Madison-Grant can clinch a share of its first conference title since 2006 with a win over the Indians, which would also avenge a 6-5 loss to Ole Miss from the Grant Four. Mississinewa scored four runs in the top of the seventh in the May 1 meeting to force extra innings, then won it in the eighth.

“For the first six innings of the Grant Four we got solid pitching and played good defense. We’ve got to make better decisions on the base paths,” Haley said. “We made a couple bad moves on the base paths and it cost us a couple runs. They’re just a scary team.

“(Senior pitcher) Nick (Evans) is gonna have to be on top of his game,” he continued. “I take the blame for that first game because I didn’t take Nick out when I felt I should have. He shook me off, which I expect that from a competitor like Nick. I lost a lot of sleep over that. We’ll be alright. Nick will be good to go. We’ll just have to make better decisions on the base baths. Mississinewa is a scary team.”

Against Blackford, M-G got a strong outing on the mound from freshman Teagan Yeagy, who scattered five singles and allowed just an unearned run to move his record to 2-1 this season. Yeagy struck out seven Bruins and walked two through four innings.

Sophomore Maddox Beckley allowed a leadoff single in the fifth, but followed with a pair of strikeouts and got a nice running catch in foul territory by Evans at first base to end the game.

“Teagan didn’t have his best stuff tonight but he gutted it out for four innings,” Haley said. “Really, the top of the fourth he was gassed and I said just get this last guy out and we’ll get you out of here. He struck that last guy out and that was a huge lift for us.

“He’s a gritty tough kid. When I walked out there to talk to him the first time, I asked him how he was and he said I just don’t have it.”

Blackford threatened to cut into the Argylls’ 5-1 lead in the top of the fourth when its first two hitters each had a single to start the inning. The runners were at first and third with no outs when Yeagy retired the next batter by strikeout, got a foul pop fly caught at third by senior Cole Hasty for the second out then finished it off with another K.

The momentum of working out of a potential jam carried over to the plate for M-G, and it quickly broke the game open.

Junior Brayden Shoemaker reached on an error to start the frame, went first to third on a sacrifice bunt by senior Justin Moore and scored on a wild pitch. Yeagy followed with a double, Hasty drew a walk and stole second and Evans drove both in with a single. Junior Mason Richards then slugged a towering home run into a stiff breeze blowing in from left field to increase Madison-Grant’s lead to 10-1.

Before the fourth inning was over, 16 Argylls took an at-bat, 13 reached base and 11 crossed the plate.

“Our kids came out and just hit,” Haley said. “We scored three in the first inning and that got us off to a good start.”

The Argylls collected 16 hits, including five for extra bases.

Richards and Hasty each went 3-for-4 and Beckley was 3-for-3. Richards had four RBI while Hasty, Evans and Beckley each drove in two runs apiece. Hasty also scored three times with Shoemaker, Evans, Yeagy and junior Chad Harbert crossing the plate twice for the Argylls.

Madison-Grant moved its record to 14-4 and hosted Lapel on Wednesday ahead of its CIC battle with Ole Miss Thursday. M-G meets Tri-Central in the first game of the Argyll Invite Saturday at 9 a.m. and hosts Anderson on Tuesday.

The Argylls close out their CIC schedule against Oak Hill on May 20 at 5 p.m. in Fairmount.

“They don’t want to share it. They want it all to themselves,” Haley said of M-G’s chase for just the third CIC baseball championship in school history. The first one was in 1983.

“They know they’ve got a lot of work ahead of them. Mississinewa and Oak Hill are not going to be easy, but it feels good right now to be in that seat. We’ve got our fate in our own hands, we’ve just got to take care of business.”