

Western National Tourney

Colby girls are 1-1 in bracket action

By RALPH WOLF
Special Reporter

HASTINGS, Neb. — The Colby Sweet Thunder 18-Under team opened the bracket portion of the Western National Fast Pitch Softball Tournament here on Thursday, losing a close game to the Pajaro Valley Tremblers from Watsonville, Calif., 6-4. They won their second game, 9-5.

The Tremblers scored two runs in the top half of the first inning, but Colby answered when Shanae Calkins knocked the ball over the centerfield fence for two RBI's. Pajaro Valley had a big second inning when their shortstop hit a grand slam.

Sarah Redmond pitched two innings, giving up four hits, six runs and walked two. Corri Ball came in as a relief pitcher in the third inning, going the five. Ball allowed four hits, one walk, struck out three and no runs.

Calkins had a home run (second of the tournament) with two RBI's. Whitney Adams went two-for-four with a pair of singles. Brittany Pettibone was credited with a

double and Shawna Cox and Stephanie Wieland both had RBI singles.

As a team, Sweet Thunder collected seven hits and committed three errors.

In their second game of the day, Colby faced the Lady Bruins from Omaha (they won the regional tournament in Hastings July 11-13), and came away with a 9-5 victory.

With their backs against the wall, trailing 4-0, the Thunder exploded in the top of the fifth inning with nine runs on seven hits.

Shanae Calkins came up with a monster shot over the fence for three RBI's (her third homer of the tourney). Savannah Rupp was two-for-four, Samantha Wolf and Becky Herl both went one-for-three from the plate. Shawna Cox had an RBI single land Hope Maley also had a single.

Corri Ball pitched all seven innings, giving up eight hits, no walked and striking out one.

Colby is back on the diamond today. They were scheduled to play at 3 p.m. and if they win they will play again at 7 p.m.

Eason is back at camp, but nothing being said

DENVER (AP)—Rookie defensive tackle Nick Eason returned to the Denver Broncos training camp on Thursday after disappearing for two days, but neither he nor coach Mike Shanahan would talk about his absence.

Eason was unavailable for comment. Shanahan met with him Thursday afternoon but declined to talk about what was said until after speaking with the team.

"I had a good conversation with him. We had a lengthy visit and he is all right," Shanahan said.

Eason participated in the first

four days of camp but didn't show up Tuesday or Wednesday and didn't tell team officials where he was.

Gene Krcelic, one of Eason's agents, has said Eason was dealing with personal problems.

"I can't get into it much more than that right now," Krcelic said Wednesday.

Eason, one of Denver's three fourth-round draft picks, is expected to be a backup after being drafted out of Clemson with the 114th overall pick.

White Sox trail Royals by one game

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — The Chicago White Sox are still in second place, only they're a lot closer to first than they were a short time ago.

The White Sox, who were seven games back of first-place Kansas City at the All-Star break, cut Kansas City's lead in the AL Central to one game by completing a three-game sweep of the Royals with an 8-6, 11-inning victory Thursday night.

First baseman Paul Konerko played it cool after Chicago completed its first sweep in Kansas City since 1991.

"It's nice to get a sweep of the team that's leading the division," said Konerko, who hit a grand slam in Wednesday's 15-4 win and a two-run homer on Thursday.

"But nobody won the division with this series and nobody lost the division with this series. There's still a lot of baseball left."

Royals manager Tony Pena, whose team has gone 6-8 since the break and has lost seven of 10, also tried to keep the race in perspective.

"Our ballclub is going to be back," said Pena, whose team opens a three-game series Friday night against Tampa Bay — the last-place team in the AL East.

"We're still in first place. They're still chasing us."

The White Sox, meanwhile, travel to Seattle for a series against the AL West-leading Mariners.

"We've played well against Seattle," manager Jerry Manuel said. "If we get some more guys to step up for us, I think we can continue to do well."

On Thursday, it was Sandy Alomar's turn to step up — even though he wasn't expecting to.

When Manuel called for Brian Daubach to pinch hit in the 11th inning, Alomar figured he could duck away to the restroom.

Then the Royals brought in left-hander Graeme Lloyd to replace Nate Field (1-1), and Manuel called for Alomar instead.

Crunch! Crash! Bam!



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Drivers got with it during the annual demolition derby at the Thomas County Free Fair Thursday night. Jeff Fromholtz, took first place, followed by Travis Fromholtz in second and Shawn Fromholtz in third. Flagger Jeff Koel was hit when the car he was

flagging was struck by another, but he was doing fine today, according to fair board member Nancy Rundel. She said he was taken to Citizens Medical Center by ambulance, evaluated and released.

Reds get late-inning victory over Rockies

CINCINNATI (AP) — All-Star third baseman Aaron Boone is gone. Gabe White, Jose Guillen and Scott Williamson have been shipped out, too.

The only thing left in the Cincinnati Reds' clubhouse is the positive late-inning karma.

The dismembered team finished another tearful day with another late-inning victory as Jason LaRue's 10th-inning homer beat the Colorado Rockies 5-4 Thursday night, temporarily easing some pain.

"Anytime you get a last-inning victory, that's one of the best adrenalin rushes you can get," said LaRue, who hit his career-high 13th homer off Brian Fuentes (2-1).

They've had more such rushes than anyone else.

During the early months of their inaugural season at Great American Ball Park, the Reds managed to overcome the NL's worst pitching and the major leagues' worst defense with dramatic hits.

Between April 11 and June 17, they had nine game-ending hits. The drama dried up, the losses piled up, and the organization tore up its blueprint by firing the general manager and manager and dumping players.

As the tension mounted, the late wins returned. They've gone 3-1 since Monday, with all three wins coming in the 10th inning. They've had 12 game-ending hits overall and 25 wins in their last at-bat, the most in the majors.

It's about the only way they can win — they have only 49 victories this season.

"I would think the formula they used in all of those walk-off wins was the formula tonight," interim manager Dave Miley said.

That formula was overcome a lot of bad things with one good swing.

LaRue became the 11th different Reds player to end a game with a hit. He fell behind 1-2, then was just trying to make contact to keep his at-bat alive when Fuentes made a huge mistake.

He threw his third changeup of the at-bat, one that stayed up.

"It was a bad pitch," Fuentes said. "I liked the selection. I just put it in a bad spot."

The Reds got ahead by batting around for four runs in the second off Chin-hui Tsao.

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