

Freshman gives Defenders needed spark

Warrior Run 14

Warrior Run rallies past Lewisburg

Lewisburg 4

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By Chris Nagy

TURBOTVILLE—Trailing Lewisburg and seeing that his team, which had lost five straight, was playing with a lack of emotion and urgency, Warrior Run head coach Garth Watson was just hoping that someone—any one—would give his squad a spark.

Maddie Beyer did just that.

The freshman delivered the boost the Defenders needed in the second inning and from that point on, the Defenders played more inspired softball and rallied to defeat Lewisburg 14-4 Tuesday afternoon in a Heartland Athletic Conference Division II matchup.

"You would hope that one of your seniors would step up and deliver that spark," said Watson. "But Maddie is a gamer and she just plays with a lot of energy and emotion."

"She gave us the spark we needed."

Lewisburg (0-11) jumped out to a 4-0 lead playing the type of softball fans haven't seen from the Dragons in years.

"Our offense was fantastic today," said Lewisburg head coach Devin Crebs. "We slapped hit, we bunted, we fake bunted. We did everything we needed to.

"It show how much these girls have really come along."

Kirsten Blakeslee drew a walk to start the second and after Megan Smiley singled. Gabby Herman laid down a perfect bunt and Blakeslee beat the throw home to make it 1-0 for the Dragons.

With the bases loaded, Anna Gargano drew a walk and that was enough to chase Warrior Run starter Mikayla Griner and bring in Jackie Vognetz.

The rain started to fall and the game was stopped for about 30 minutes until play restarted, but Lewisburg remained hot.

Alexis Neuer knocked in a run with a single and then an illegal pitch on what was called a third strike brought in another run to make it 4-0.

Warrior Run came to bat in the bottom of the second and McKenna Beyer led off with a single and stole second, after a groundout Vognetz singled and Mackenzie Gardner knocked in the Defenders' first run with a sac fly.

Gabby Heiss reached on an error that scored Vognetz and that brought up Maddie Beyer.

The freshman dropped down a perfect bunt and then turned on the jets down the line. She beat out the throw and got tangled with the first basemen injuring her ankle. On the play Heiss scored to make it 4-3.

At no point did Maddie want to be taken out of the game refusing request for a pinch runner. She would later come around and score on a Laura Bastian single that had two errors on the play to tie the score up.

"Maddie showed a lot of heart today," said Watson. "When we needed a lift, she delivered."

"You could see the rest of the team pick it up after that."

Warrior Run put the game out of reach in the third.

The Defenders (3-7) scored seven runs on five hits with the big one being an RBI triple by Lynn Vermilya, who would then score on a throwing error.

Vognetz then shut down the Dragons and Warrior Run added three more in the bottom of the fifth to kick in the mercy rule.

"We started slow," said Watson. "But when they needed to pick it up, they did. We still have a lot of work to do but they are starting to come together."

For Lewisburg it was a case of what might have been.

"We almost pulled it out," said Crebs. "It was that third inning again. That inning has killed us all season long."

Both teams will be back in action Thursday as Warrior Run heads to Central Columbia while Lewisburg hosts Montoursville.

Warrior Run 14, Lewisburg 4

at Warrior Run

Lewisburg (0-11) 040 00—4-5-5

Warrior Run (3-7) 047 03—14-10-0

Alexis Neuer and Rita Benfer, Mikayla Griner, Jackie Vognetz (2) and Lynn Vermilya.

W—Vognetz. L—Neuer.

Leading hitters for Lewisburg: Neuer, single, RBI; Kirsten Blakeslee, 2-for-2, run scored; Megan Smiley, 2-for-2, run scored; Anna Gargano, RBI, run scored.

Leading hitters for Warrior Run: Maddie Beyer, 1-for-3, 2 RBI, run scored; Laura Bastian, 2-for-3, 2 runs scored; Vermilya, triple, 2 RBI; Carra Rishell, 2-for-4, 2 RBI; McKenna Beyer, 2-for-3, double, RBI, 2 runs scored; Jackie Vognetz, single, 2 runs scored; Mackenzie Gardner, single, 3 RBI, run scored; Gabby Heiss, 2 runs scored, RBI.