

Blast Bested By Greenville

Written by Staff Reports

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The Watauga Blast softball team suffered a pair of losses Tuesday night at Happy Valley High School in Elizabethton, TN. The games were shortened to five innings because of the heat.

The Blast dropped the opener 6-5, and lost the night cap, 3-0. In game one, the Blast (3-3) jumped out to a 5-1 lead in the top of the third before the wheels came off. In the bottom of the 3rd inning, Greenville scored 5 runs, 4 of which were unearned, to grab the lead. Rachel Fortel came on in relief and to pitch and silenced the Blast bats.

"Riley pitched a wonderful game, but unfortunately, we just couldn't give her any defensive help when she needed it," said Watauga coach Jerry Moretz. "We are much better than what we showed tonight, and I know these young ladies will bounce right back.

"That's what I love about this team. They pick themselves right back up, go back to work, and come out fighting."

Pudney gave up one earned run in five innings. She scattered four hits and struck out seven. Kim Robinson had two hits, including a home run, with three RBI. Hope LaPointe had a hit and scored twice.

In game two, Rachel Fortel continued her domination of the Watauga by limiting the Blast to a first-inning single by Shelby Winebarger. She walked two and struck out five. Kim Robinson, who suffered her first loss of the year, ran into some control issues in the first inning. she walked three of the four batters she faced. Greenville scored of its runs in the first inning.

"It was a match up of good, young, hard-throwing pitchers," Moretz said. "Fortel was tough but we should have hit her. It was my fault for not having them prepared for what they were going to see. We will work hard on hitting Wednesday and be ready for our game Thursday against Johnson County.

"Our approach to summer ball with the Blast is to learn and prepare yourself for the high school season and beyond. Coach Isaacs and myself want them to learn the game and learn things about themselves while having fun doing it. That is the approach these young ladies have as well. We also try to instill in them a belief that the other team has to beat us because we won't beat ourselves. Unfortunately, tonight, we beat ourselves. I don't want to take anything away from the performance of Greenville, because they are a very, very good team, but we gave them a lot of gifts."

The Blast is dealing with their first losing streak in the Happy Valley High School Summer League. Last summer, the Blast finished the season 13-1 and league and tournament champions. The Blast take to field again on Thursday at 6 pm for a double-header against Johnson County.