

Roberson Handcuffs Pioneers

Written by Mike Kelly
Thursday, 06 March 2014 11:52

It's been quite a journey for North Davidson High senior Josh Roberson. Roberson, a right hander, who suffered a huge loss when his mother passed away during the state playoffs last season, threw a gem against Watauga (2-1) Wednesday afternoon.

Roberson, who fanned ten on the day, carried a no-hitter into the seventh inning before Steadman Sauls broke it up with a one-out infield single in the top of the seventh. The ball deflected off the glove of second baseball Kyhlil Miller and rolled into short center field.

"I was fighting against pulling him out," said North Davidson coach Mike Meadows. "It's early in the season, and we had him on an 85-pitch limit. But he was tossing a no-hitter, and he got into a groove, so I decided to keep him out there."

Roberson, who walked four, retired 12 in a row from the third to through the sixth innings. And he struck out seven men during that stretch. Roberson threw 100 pitches on the day,

"The slider was my out pitch today," said Roberson, who has verbally committed to

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UNC-Wilmington. "I really didn't know that much about Watauga. I remember (Utah) Jones from last year, but the rest of their line up was basically new to me. But I got my curve ball over today, and I was able to keep them off balance."

"(Roberson) did a great job today," said WHS coach Pete Hardee. "We just never got comfortable up there. He had a great curve ball today. He got us to chase a lot of his stuff. It was a great effort."

And Roberson got all the support he needed when the Black Knights (1-1) broke through for four runs against losing pitcher Hunter Isaacs in the second inning. Austin Beck had the big blow in the frame with a three-run homer.

Isaacs (1-1), despite the loss, went 6 1/3 innings. He coughed up seven runs on nine hits, but he was also victimized by four costly errors---one of which he committed himself. The Pioneers had committed only one error in their first two games.

"I give Mike (Meadows) a lot of credit," Hardee said. "He saw we were struggling with our bunt coverage, and he took advantage of it. We just made too many mistakes today. We made some poor throws, we had balls deflect off our gloves. It just wasn't a very good effort on our part. But that's why you play teams like this. It shows us just what we really need to work on."

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Trailing 4-0, the Pioneers had their best chance to score in the third. Roberson walked Andy Critcher and Colby Illich to start the inning. But Roberson buckled down and retired the next three hitters to end the threat. And Roberson was in complete control from that point on before he ran out of gas in the seventh.

"He was in a zone," Meadows said. "But he's a senior, he know what it takes to be successful at this level. We're young this season (it's the youngest team Meadows has had at North Davidson in his 17-year coaching career), and he's our ace. But Watauga made some mistakes that helped us out, too. They had a tough day in the field. And their (Hunter Isaacs), that guy knows how to pitch, but he had a couple of rough innings. We got lucky against him. I'll guarantee you it'll be a different game when we play them up the mountain (on April 5)."

E.P. Reese applied the finishing touch with a two-run shot over the right-center field wall fueling a three-run fourth inning.

The Pioneers are scheduled to play A.C. Reynolds in their home opener at Pioneer Field Saturday. Matt Lambert is WHS' scheduled starter. Coverage begins at 2:30 p.m. on AM 1450, WATA and GoBlueridge.net.

WEDNESDAY'S GAMES

NORTHWESTERN 3A/4A CONFERENCE

NORTH DAVIDSON 7, WATAUGA 0

BUNKER HILL 9, HIBRITEN 8

MAIDEN 7, FRED T. FOARD 6

PATTON 10, EAST BURKE 4