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'Cats Thump Green Wave In Season Opener

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By Andrew Cato, ShowMe Times Sports Editor

The Dexter Bearcats opened the 2012 season with a bang on Tuesday afternoon, capitalizing on a five RBI effort from Chase Young in an 11-4 victory over the Malden Green Wave.

With runners on first and second, Young stepped to the plate with a 9-6 lead in the bottom of the sixth. After falling 1-2, Young fouled off seven straight pitches and finally shot a drive into left-center for his fourth and fifth RBI's on the day.

"The at-bat by Chase Young in the end was incredible. He fouled off about seven really good pitches, and then shot the ball out there to left field," head coach Brian Becker said of his shortstop. "You tip your hat to their pitcher; you know he had to be frustrated, but sometimes you just have to tip your hat to the guy that comes out on top."

"That's why he's in the three hole; he's going to come up a lot of times with runners on base, and he's a really good hitter," he continued. "I think people know that about him; he's just a real good ball player."

Becker was pleased with the win, but noted a pair of fielding errors midway through the contest as key areas that needed improvement.

"It wasn't pretty at all, but any time you can start the season 1-0 and not 0-1, it's a good start," he said. "We saw a lot of positive things and a lot of negative things, but that's the way the first game looks a lot of times. We had some opportunities early in the game to break it open and we didn't get the job done, but later in the game we had some big hits by Chase [Young] and Jordan [Miller]."

The game was tied at 1-1 after the first inning; solid pitching by starter Owen Flowers (2 2/3 IP, 3 K, 3 BB, 3 ER) gave the 'Cats a chance to take the lead in the bottom of the second. Josh Overall came up with a leadoff single before Owen Flowers was able to make it to second on a fielding error. Logan Northern was thrown out at home on a fielder's choice, but not before Overall and Flowers both crossed the plate. Young's one out double drove Cody Neldon home to give the 'Cats a 4-2 lead.

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Wave were able to tie the game at 4-4 in the third, but Overall (4 1/3 IP, 7 K, 2 BB, 0 ER) was rotated from second base to the mound with two down and got the 'Cats out of the inning without allowing another run to score.

Flowers started a perfect 4-6-3 double play in the fifth inning to give the 'Cats some momentum heading into the bottom of the fifth. With the bases loaded, Jordan Miller picked up his first hit of the day - a bases-clearing double - to increase Dexter's lead to 9-4 lead.

"Jordan started out the game not-so-hot; he made a couple boo-boo's on defense, and didn't have very good at bats early in the game. He stepped up there in the end and got a big hit for us, and that's what we need," Becker said. "Guys are going to struggle, and when they do, they've got to push that aside and keep plugging along. He did a good job of stepping up for us there late in the game."

Becker was impressed with the efforts of both his pitchers in the contest; it was Overall's first time on the field since missing the majority of last season after shoulder surgery.

"Josh did a heck of a job. He came in and threw strikes, and Coach Pixley told him after the game that it could very well be the first time he's pitched and not hit somebody," Becker said, laughing. "[It was his] first game back; I thought he did a good job, and I thought Owen did a good job as well. [Owen] had trouble hitting his spots there in the third inning, but overall I thought both pitchers did a good job."

The Bearcats will be back in action Wednesday (March 21) afternoon when they head to Kennett in the first Class 3, District 1 contest of the season. The Indians made a deep run into the playoffs last season after downing Dexter in the District Championship game.

"Any time you go down to Kennett, it's going to be tough. Whenever they have a team like they have this year, it's doubly tough," Becker said. "They lost a few, but they have a lot of kids back from last year's team, and you know going down there that they'll be hard to handle. We're going to go down there and do our best, and we'll see what we can do."

The game is set to get underway at 4:00 p.m.; Jordan Miller is expected to get the start for the Bearcats.

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