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Lady 'Cats 3rd In 'Swing Pink' Tournament

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By Andrew Cato, ShowMe Times Sports Editor

The first annual 'Swing Pink' softball tournament kicked off on Saturday morning with perfect weather and plenty of fans in the stands to cheer on all eight teams.

The Lady Bearcats opened the day against the East Prairie Lady Eagles; despite sloppy fielding - the Lady 'Cats committed six errors in the game - trailing the Eagles 10-4 heading into the bottom of the fifth, and playing the last two innings with just eight players on the field, the Lady Bearcats were able to put together a wild finish in the come-from-behind, 13-12 victory.

Catcher Whitney Layton was forced to leave the game in the top of the fifth inning with concussion-like symptoms, but the Lady 'Cats didn't have any reserve players on the bench. The Bearcats were able to play with eight ladies on the field, but had to take an automatic out when Layton's spot in the batting order came up.

With two on, two outs, and a 3-1 count, Diana Gilliam - the #9 batter in the lineup, and the Lady Bearcats' last chance to take the lead - stepped into the batters box and waited for a pitch. The next pitch sailed over the catchers head, and Madison Christian stole home on the wild pitch to give the Lady 'Cats a 13-12 victory.

"I don't even know how you'd describe it," head coach Leonard Morse said of the whacky

finish. "We had an automatic out looming right behind it, and I gave the wrong signal to her a couple times. Our girls wanted it; they came back from being way down, with all the odds stacked against them after losing Whitney to that injury. I've never see anything like it. It shows that our girls have it if they want it, and they wanted it."

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The next contest pitted the Lady Bearcats against the formidable Neelyville Lady Tigers. Due to Layton's injury, the Lady 'Cats had to do some shifting in the field; Kendra Stevenson went to catcher, while Becky Anderson, who was ineligible in the first game, came in to pitch.

The Lady 'Cats were held scoreless until the fourth inning; Stevenson hit a leadoff single, and was able to steal second and third bases. Emily Triplett's single down the third base line drove in Stevenson, but the 'Cats trailed 5-1 heading into the fifth inning.

The Tigers took the field with hot bats in the top of the fifth inning; Jessica Crosby grounded out to second to lead off the inning, followed by a hot shot to left-center from Kenna Shepherd for a single. The Tigers put together a six run rally in the fifth to take a commanding 11-1 lead. The Lady Bearcats were only able to put one run on the board in the bottom half of the fifth, before the Tigers strung together another five run rally in the sixth to seal the final score at 16-2.

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The Lady 'Cats moved into the Third Place contest with the loss, where they met the Zalma Lady Bulldogs. Zalma had posted a win over Arcadia Valley and a loss to East Carter County on the day.

Anderson again took to the mound for the Lady 'Cats, and recorded nine K's in the contest.

Dexter trailed 4-1 heading into the fourth inning; Celina Skaggs smacked an RBI double in the top of the fourth to give the Bulldogs a 5-1 lead, but , three straight doubles from Stevenson, Triplett, and Riley Rickman allowed the 'Cats to tally three runs in the inning and tie the game at 5-5.

Trista Clark was able to score on an error to give the Bulldogs a 6-5 lead heading into the

bottom of the seventh inning. Ashley Brown led the 'Cats off with a single, but was able to advance to third after an error on Zalma's first basemen. Taylor Owens stepped to the plate, and delivered a single down the first base line, but was able to cross home plate thanks to three errors on the play, ending the game with a 7-6 final score.

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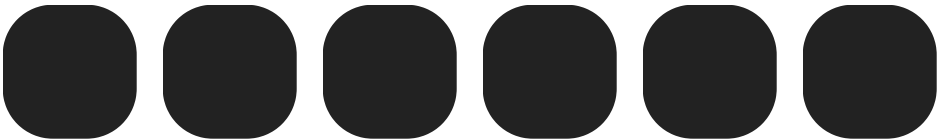
After the 2-1 effort in the tournament, the Lady Bearcats stand at 3-3 on the season. The Lady Bearcats will be off until Tuesday, when they host Malden in a 4:30 p.m. contest.

All proceeds from the first annual Swing Pink tournament went to the Ben Kruse 18 FORE Life Foundation, a local organization dedicated to helping the families of individuals who are battling cancer.

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