



TOP

Bearcats Knock Off Sikeston In 5-4 Thriller

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By Andrew Cato, ShowMe Times Sports Editor

The Dexter Bearcats were able to come out on top of a thrilling back-and-forth contest against the Sikeston Bulldogs on Monday afternoon. A perfect throw by Logan 'Perry' Northern caught Sikeston's Drew Harper at the plate for the final out of the 5-4 game.

"Any time you can beat Sikeston, it's a good win," head coach Brian Becker said. "They're always going to be a quality team; they have good players and good coaches over there, and any time you get a win against them it's a good thing."

Chase Young was tagged out at home on a close play in the bottom of the fourth inning; after a heated exchange between Becker and umpire Joe Baldwin, the call stood, but Becker felt the play at the plate to end the game was a much easier call.

"The one at the end there was pretty obvious. There wasn't much doubt that he was thrown out at the plate," he said, laughing. "The one before that...I'm not so sure. I lost my composure a little bit there, and sometimes that happens. Joe [Baldwin] has been around a long time, and I've been around a long time. We've been at it before, and it probably won't be our last time."

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Northern
found

himself in right field after an injury to Cody Neldon in the fourth inning. Neldon fouled a pitch back into his face and exited the game, forcing Becker to shift Brad Potts to center field and put Northern in right to fill out the lineup.

"[Cody] left school early in the day because he wasn't feeling good. He went to the doctor, came back, and said he was feeling better, so I put him out there and he did an outstanding job for me in the outfield," Becker said. "He went to bunt to get on, fouled one off his face, and next thing you know Perry's in there. It's only fitting that the game should end on Perry throwing a guy out at the plate."

Alex Cliff (2-1, 3.75 ERA) took the start for the Bearcats and struck out five batters in 4 1/3 innings of work. Jordan Miller (2.93 ERA, 18 K's) threw 2 2/3 shutout innings in relief, and also earned five K's in the contest.

"Alex Cliff started for us, and picked up where he left off in his last start. He struggled a little bit early with his breaking ball, but overall he did a very good job for us. He mixed his pitches up really well," Becker said. Jordan Miller came in and just threw smoke; he was very effective today. He came in with second and third and one out, and struck out both batters to get us a little momentum going into the bottom half of the inning."

With the game tied at 3-3 heading into the bottom of the third inning, the Bearcats punished Sikeston starter Trent McMillan. Quality at-bats from Young, Miller, Cliff, and D.J. Dowdy forced McMillan's pitch out to 79 by the end of the inning. Young crossed the plate on a pass-ball to give the 'Cats a 4-3 lead in the inning.

"We had some  great at-bats," Becker noted. "I'll bet Cliff had 20 pitches in that at-bat. We really worked McMillan hard that inning, and carried some momentum from that for the rest of the game."

The Bulldogs were held scoreless in the fourth inning by Cliff. Miller cranked a two out RBI single to left-center to score Potts in the bottom of the fourth, but Young was caught at the plate to end the inning with the 'Cats up 5-3. An RBI double from Drew Harper brought the score to 5-4 in the top of the fifth, but excellent pitching and defense from both teams kept the score locked through the final out.

"I'm proud of our guys; we battled all day long," Becker said. "We got down a run, came back, went up, got down, then came back...that's what good teams do, and I feel like I

have a pretty good ball team this year."

Young, Cliff, and Daniel Fitts led the 'Cats with two hits apiece. Miller drove his team-leading 16th and 17th RBI's in the game.

The Bearcats will be back in action Tuesday afternoon, hosting the Charleston Blue Jays.

"You never know about Charleston," Becker noted. I think they're struggling a bit this year, but they're a well-coached team and they'll come here ready to play."

The game is set to get underway at 4:00 p.m.; Becker noted that the starting pitcher was undecided.

Editor's note: Speaking with Cody Neldon after the game, he indicated that he was feeling better, and barring any changes, he expected to be in the lineup Tuesday afternoon.

Photos Above:

Top: Logan Northern (#16) is greeted by his teammates and coaches in the dugout after delivering a laser to D.J. Dowdy to catch Sikeston's Drew Harper for the final out of the game.

Middle: Sikeston catcher Josh Hampton applies a tag to Dexter's Chase Young during the fourth inning. Coach Becker appealed the call at the plate, but umpire Joe Baldwin stood firm on the out.

Bottom: Alex Cliff took the start and the win for the Bearcats; the senior struck out five batters over 4 1/3 innings of work, while giving up 4 earned runs and 3 walks.

/images/Sports/2012/Baseball/2012.4.9 - Sikeston/20120409_BB_Sikeston_STATS.jpg

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