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Baseball 'Cats Fall To Poplar Bluff 6-5

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By Andrew Cato, ShowMe Times Sports Editor

Tuesday afternoon's late-inning heroics were nowhere to be found when the Bearcats faced off against Poplar Bluff on Wednesday afternoon. Trailing 6-5 in the bottom of the seventh inning, the Bearcats were three up, three down to end the game.

All five of Dexter's runs were the results of home runs that barely made it out of the park; Chase Young smacked a three-run shot in the third inning that bounced off the top of the fence, while Daniel Fitts' two-run blast in the second inning dinged off the foul pole in left field.

"Today's game seemed like it was a game of inches all day long," head coach Brian Becker said after the loss. "Chase [Young] hits one over the fence by an inch, and Daniel [Fitts] hits [a home run] that was an inch fair; on their end, they had a base hit go off the end of [Jordan] Miller's glove that brought in two runs for them, and had a play here at third off the end of Owen [Flowers]'s glove that brought in the tying run."

Miller took the start for the Bearcats, striking out one batter, walking three, and giving up five runs (three earned) in his five innings of work. The junior right-hander struggled with command of his breaking ball throughout the contest.

Alex Cliff struck out two batters and gave up one earned run in his two innings of relief.

"[Jordan] threw all right. He didn't have his best stuff today, and he was pushing the ball quite a bit, which makes him throw it high," Becker said of his starter. "He struggled with his breaking ball, but all-in-all I thought he worked out of some jams pretty good for the most part. He did a good job."

"Cliff came in and did all right," Becker added. "He gave up a hard-hit ball down the left field line that plated the game-winner for them, but other than that he did a good job."

The Mules quickly responded to Young's three-run shot in the first, plating two runs on a double from Charlie Kayser in the top of the second. The top of the fourth saw the Mules add two more runs, this time on a single by Kayser, to take a 4-3 lead.

Fitts' solo 

shot to left in the fifth inning gave the Bearcats a 5-4 lead, but Drew Dowd crossed home plate for the Mules after an infield throwing error on the Bearcats.

Cliff smacked a line drive to left field for a one-out single in the bottom of the fifth inning; singles from Miller and D.J. Dowdy loaded the bases, but the 'Cats were unable to take advantage of the situation and couldn't score.

Logan Faith hit a hot shot down the left field line for an RBI double to plate the game-winning run for the Mules in the top of the sixth inning; the Bearcats would strand men on first and second in the bottom half of the inning. Lefty reliever Brandon Stuchenschneider would retire the 'Cats in order in the bottom of the seventh inning to seal the victory for the Mules.

"You've got to give credit to Poplar Bluff; they swung the bats well today," Becker said. "I thought we swung 'em well early, but after that the left hander came in and did a good job against us. We just couldn't get the big hit there; we had opportunities, we just couldn't get them in. You can't do that against teams like Bluff; they are a good ball club, and when you get runners in scoring position, you have to get them in."

With the loss, the 'Cats fall to 10-4 on the season, with a 4-3 record in conference games. With the SEMO Conference tournament beginning in less than a week, Becker noted the high level of competition this season.

"This conference is as tough as it's ever been. From town to town, there is good baseball all over southeast Missouri. The conference is as good as I've ever seen it this year,"

Becker said. "It's going to be really tough to seed this tournament. It's going to be really interesting to see who has who where; it's going to be a fun tournament with some good baseball."

The Bearcats will be back in action on Friday (April 20) afternoon, when they open the Notre Dame Classic against Country Day (MICDS) in a 3:00 p.m. contest. Owen Flowers (2-1, 1.68 ERA) will be on the mound for the 'Cats.

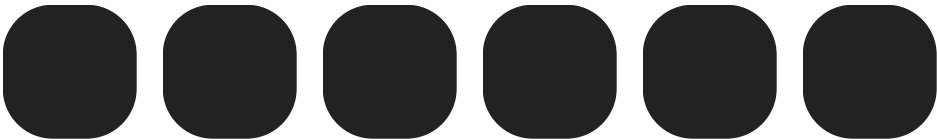
Photos Above:
Top: Jordan Miller fires a pitch to Poplar Bluff's Josh King during the second inning of Wednesday's SEMO Conference battle.
Bottom: Daniel Fitts is congratulated by head coach Brian Becker after hitting a two-run home run in the bottom of the fourth inning.

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Girls Track Wins Dexter Open

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Girls Track Wins Dexter Open

By Andrew Cato, ShowMe Times Sports Editor

The DHS Track team hosted their lone meet of the year on Tuesday afternoon. The meet included teams from Chaffee, Saxony Lutheran, Poplar Bluff, Oran, Charleston, Delta, and Sikeston.

The Boys team finished seventh in an eight team field with 37 points. Charleston, with 108 points, edged Chaffee, with 101 points, for first place in the Boys division.

Dylan Heflin finished fifth in the discus with a 99' 5" throw, while Zach Lacy finished fifth in shot put with a 34' 10" throw. Alex Rybolt finished fourth in the 1600m (1 mile) run, with a 5:26.43 time, and also came in second place in the 3200m (2 mile) run with a time of 11:30.78. Jon Foels finished third in the long jump with a 18.3 jump, beating out Zach Comstock, who finished fifth with a 17.6 jump.

A big sign of hope for the Boys was the return of Austin Richardson; the junior had missed all of the season before yesterday's meet while recovering from knee surgery, and was cleared for competition yesterday morning. Richardson finished in a three-way tie for second place in the high jump, clearing 5' 4".

The Lady 'Cats rolled to an easy victory in the six team field; their 217 final score beat out second-place Chaffee by over 100 points.

Taylor Martin brought home gold in both the 100m and 200m dash, as well as first place medals by her 4x100 and 4x200 relay teams. Alexis Smith finished first in the 1600m run and 3200m run, with times of 6:14.09 and 13:39.16, respectively. Taylor Winstead finished third in the 400m run with a 1:13.47.

Mollie Whitehead finished first in the discus with a 96' 1/2" throw; Jessica Lindsey earned

fourth place in the shot put with a 27' 1 1/2" toss. Lindsey Hindman and Courtney Potts finished one-two in the long jump, with 14.5 and 13.4 jumps, respectively.

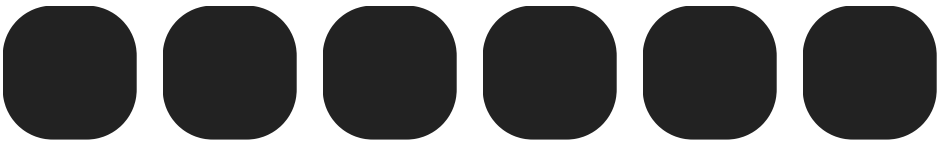
The Track team will be back in action on Thursday (April 19), when they travel to New Madrid for the Riverbend Invitational.

Photo Above: Team-mates Taylor Martin (left) and Lindsey Hindman (far right) close in on the finish line during the 100m dash in yesterday's Dexter Open. Martin finished in first place, while Hindman came in sixth.

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DMS Volleyball Sweeps SCAA Tournament

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DMS Volleyball Sweeps SCAA Tournament

PUXICO - The DMS Volleyball team swept the finals of the Stoddard County Tournament on Tuesday night; the seventh grade squad downed Bloomfield in two sets, while the eighth grade defeated Advance in two sets.

For the second time in as many years, both teams finished with undefeated records.

The seventh grade picked up a close 25-21 win in the first set, led by Ashlyn Wyman's seven points from the service line. In the second set, Lexi May put seven points on the board in the 25-17 victory.

"I felt like my girls were fired up and ready for the challenge. Overall, the girls hustled and worked hard," head coach Melissa Hahn noted. "I thought Emily Page did an excellent job on the back row. She made some great passes which allowed us to hit the ball and get some momentum in the game. Sydney Rogers had a great night at the net."

The seventh grade squad had an undefeated regular season, including first place finishes in both the Poplar Bluff Invitational Tournament and the SCAA Tournament.

The eighth grade squad faced off against Advance for the title; the Hornets were one of the few teams to take the 'Cats to three sets this season.

"Advance came in to the game off of a big win over 2nd seeded Bernie on Monday night," Hahn said. "We went three sets with them earlier in the year and I knew this was going to be a tight game."

The Bearcats came out on top 25-15 in the first set. Brittany Brown led the way with an eight point rally in the set.

"We were hitting the ball well, but Advance was picking up almost everything we sent over," Hahn said. "We really had to fight hard to earn every point. We just couldn't find a "hole" on their side of the court, but we kept playing our game and hitting the ball. I was proud of how the girls communicated and kept each other fired up on the court."

In the second set, the Bearcats and Hornets battled for control of the scoreboard. The 'Cats were able to put together a late rally and take a 25-22 victory.

"Missed serves also kept us from keeping momentum for long. The girls would have a

great pass, good set and hard hit and look great and then let one slip in over the blocker, or miss a serve," Hahn said. "Advance deserves a lot of credit, they were picking up our serves, hits and even our tips over their blockers. They are a great defensive team. However, we never gave up, kept working hard and pulled it out when it mattered most."

With the win, the eighth grade squad sealed an undefeated career at DMS, including back-to-back SCAA Championships and first place finishes in the Poplar Bluff Invitational Tournament as seventh graders and the Bernie Eighth Grade Tournament this year.

"I am eager to see these girls play at the next level," Hahn said of her eighth grade team.

Photo Above: The seventh and eighth grade squads pose with their first-place trophies from the 2012 SCAA Volleyball Tournament. (Submitted photo by Lori Hawkins; thanks Lori!)

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Softball 'Cats In SCAA Title Game

Softball 'Cats In SCAA Title Game

By Andrew Cato, ShowMe Times Sports Editor

BLOOMFIELD - The Lady Bearcats will advance to the title game of the 2012 SCAA Tournament after defeating a tough Woodland team in a 13-7 decision on Tuesday evening. The Lady 'Cats rallied for 16 hits in the contest.

Becky Anderson was on the mound for the Lady 'Cats; the senior right-hander struck out 11 batters despite struggling with command periodically throughout the game.

"When we needed it, [Becky] was there for us. I hate the fact that she threw so many pitches, but we have a day of tomorrow, so we don't have to worry about throwing her again until Thursday," head coach Leonard Morse said after the game. "She shows what a senior is all about; she has that leadership and doesn't get too rattled. She knows how to 'right the ship' when things get rough. She's a competitor, and I'm proud of her."

The Cardinals took a 2-0 lead in the bottom of the first inning after a triple by Kirkpatrick, but the Lady 'Cats responded with a three run rally in the top of the second, thanks in part to a two RBI triple from Anderson. The Cardinals tallied four runs in the bottom of the second to take a 6-3 lead.

Kendra Stevenson came up with a RBI double in the top of the third inning; Riley Rickman reached on a single to left field before Tiffany Watson cleared the bases with a triple to tie the game at 6-6. A single from Taylor Owens plated Watson for the go-ahead run.

The Cardinals had two on base with one out in the bottom of the third inning, but Anderson worked out of the jam with back-to-back strikeouts to end the inning.

Diana
Gilliam

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led off with a double for the Lady 'Cats in the top of the fourth and was driven in by Ashley Brown to increase the lead to 8-6. Anderson retired the Cardinals in order in the home half of the inning.

The Lady Bearcats plated two more runs in the fifth inning to increase their lead to 10-6;

the Cardinals turned a perfect 4-6-3 double play to end the top of the sixth before plating their seventh run in the bottom of the inning.

The 'Cats tacked on three more runs in the top of the seventh inning thanks to Brown's two RBI single; Whitney Layton followed up with an RBI single to increase the lead to 13-7. Anderson struck out the side in the bottom of the seventh to seal the win.

"I'm ecstatic; there's just no way around it. I think we finished fourth in this tournament the last three years in a row, and to be in the finals after beating a very good Woodland team...we earned it," Morse said. "The girls came out and were hitting well, they played some of the best defense they have all season. They didn't get rattled there in the early innings when we were going back and forth on the runs. They finally settled it, played really well, and earned this win; hats off to Woodland, that's a good team over there."

The 'Cats will be back in action on Thursday at 5:30 p.m., when they take on the top-seeded Advance Lady Hornets for the SCAA Championship.

"It's going to be every bit of this game tonight; I know their pitcher throws a bit harder than what we saw tonight, but she'll be around the plate. If we pay attention and not get rattled, but we've got a shot. Advance is a great team; they've lost just one game this year, and we hope to make it number two. If we do, it will be because we came through defensively and hit the ball well; the girls showed they were capable of doing that tonight."

Photos Above:

Top: Tiffany Watson rounds first base after hitting a game-tying RBI triple in the top of the third inning of Tuesday evening's semifinal contest against Woodland.

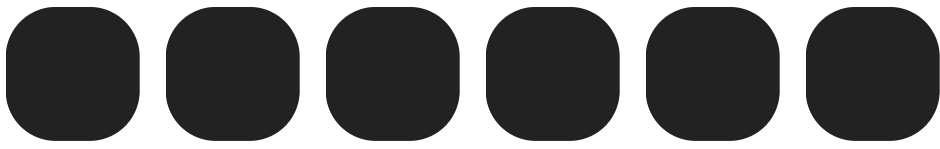
Bottom: Becky Anderson pitched a solid game against the Cardinals, giving up just seven hits and fanning 11 batters in the contest.

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DMS Volleyball To Play For SCAA Title

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DMS Volleyball To Play For SCAA Title

By Andrew Cato, ShowMe Times Sports Editor

PUXICO - The Lady Bearcats of Dexter Middle School are ready to put their undefeated records on the line tonight when they battle for the 2012 SCAA Volleyball Championship on both the seventh and eighth grade levels.

The 'Cats both earned #1 seeds in the tournament, with the seventh grade squad taking a bye in the first round.

The eighth grade squad picked up an opening round win over Richland on Saturday (April 14) morning; head coach Melissa Hahn noted that Matney Davis had some outstanding hits in the 25-10, 25-19 victory. Kendall Adams served six straight points in the second set.

On Monday (April 16) both squads were in action in the semifinal round; the seventh grade squad dispatched Advance, while the eighth grade squad sent the host Puxico Lady Indians packing in two sets.

The seventh grade squad had a tough battle with the Hornets, but ultimately emerged on top of a 25-19, 25-23 decision.

"They didn't play their best game last night and struggled to execute their offense for most of the night," Hahn said in a email earlier today. "We did some good things, however; as a team, we struggled with our mental game and playing under pressure. The girls know what they need to do tonight and I feel they are up to the challenge."

In the eighth grade contest, the Lady 'Cats won 25-9, 25-10 over the host Indians. Amber Spence and Julia Hahn combined for nine aces in the first set, while Hahn and Madison Bishop both served seven straight points in the second.

"I was very pleased with my 8th grade team's performance. We had some great sets and hits. I thought Matney Davis had another good night at the net," Coach Hahn noted. "Delaney Pullen, Ashlyn Werneck and [Julia] Hahn also had some big hits in the contest. Pullen made a nice block in the 2nd set. Lauren Thrower and Madison Bishop made some great passes to set up our offense. Overall, the girls played good team ball.

The seventh grade squad will face off with the Bloomfield Wildcats at 6:00 p.m. for the SCAA Title; the eighth grade team will face off against Advance in the championship game immediately following the seventh grade contest.

"We know that tonights game will be a tough one as Advance has taken us to three sets earlier in the season," Hahn said of tonight's eighth grade contest. "We have talked for the past week about what it takes to finish strong, and I believe my girls have what it takes to get the job done."

Photo Above: Kendall Adams awaits a serve during a regular-season home contest. (SMT File Photo by Andrew Cato)

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