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'Cats Take Third In SEMO Conference Tourney

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By Andrew Cato, ShowMe Times Sports Editor

CAPE GIRARDEAU - An early offensive explosion by the Dexter Bearcats would prove to be the deciding factor in the third place contest of the 2012 SEMO Conference tournament; the 'Cats plated seven runs in the first inning on the Poplar Bluff Mules.

The 'Cats rebounded well after a tough against top-seed Notre Dame on Saturday afternoon in a game that could have easily been won.

"We picked ourselves up well today after that difficult loss, and we came out swinging and played a good game," head coach Brian Becker said after the win. "I'm awfully proud of our kids. They came out on a mission and jumped on these guys early. We wanted third place pretty bad, and they came out swinging the bats well, and Owen did a good job after the first inning and settled in well."

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right-hander struck out two and walked four in the 118 pitch outing.

"They had some hard hit balls against [Owen], but our defense played well behind him," Becker noted. "Whenever Owen needed a good pitch to come out of a tough situation, he made that pitch. I'm very proud of him. He had another good outing today."

The bottom half of the Bearcat lineup carried most of the brunt of the offensive attack in the contest. D.J. Dowdy (2-4, 2 R, 1 RBI, 2 K), Josh Overall (2-3, 2 R, 2 RBI, 1 BB, 1 K), and Cody Neldon (3-4, 1 R, 3 RBI) all had multi-hit outings. Dowdy had his third-straight two hit game, while Neldon had his first multi-hit game in seven contests, and just his second of the season; Overall extended his hit streak to seven games.

"Josh is starting to swing the bat; he was four-for-eight going in the tournament going into this game, and he's starting to swing the bat right now," Becker said of his second baseman. "If we can get him and some of these other guys that have been struggling a bit to start going, and it appears some of them are starting to turn it around, that'll do nothing but good things for us."

The 'Cats jumped on Poplar Bluff starter Jonathan Pratt early for seven runs, six hits, and three walks; Pratt exited the game after 2/3 of an inning. The Mules would use four pitchers in the contest, with Lucas Tibbs closing out the final three and 2/3 innings of the game.

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when Brad Potts drove a single into right field to score Logan Northern on a close play at the plate.

Dexter put together another big inning in the fourth, putting up four runs on two bases-loaded walks and a single to deep left by Neldon. The Bearcats would be held scoreless in the fifth inning before another hard-hit single by Neldon in the sixth brought Overall across home plate for the thirteenth run of the game for Dexter.

With just three more games before the Class 3, District 1 Tournament, Becker noted that now is as good a time as any for his squad to heat things up.

"We're picking a good time of the year to start getting hot; I don't think this team has peaked yet," he said. "We still have a lot of good baseball ahead of us, and hopefully we can come out this weekend and have a good showing against Cooter and Clearwater, two good teams, and we can build a win streak heading into Districts."

The 'Cats will be in action again on Saturday (May 5) when they host Cooter and Clearwater in a doubleheader; the 'Cats open the day with a 10:00 a.m. contest against Cooter, and will face off against Clearwater at 2:00 p.m.

Photos Above:

Top: The team hoists their third-place trophy after Monday's big win over Poplar Bluff.

Middle: Owen Flowers threw his fourth complete game of the season; he only had two strikeouts, but great defense behind him helped limit the Mules' offense.

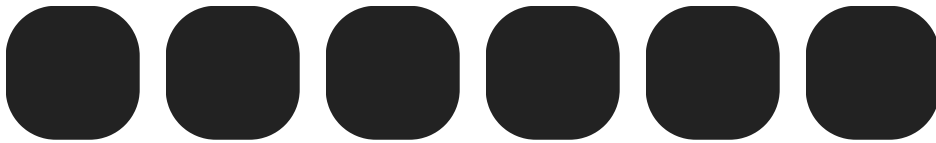
Bottom: Josh Overall fires a ball to first base after making the tag for a 4-3 double play.

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