

Post 180 Outscored by Springfield

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This summer, Springfield Post 176 has changed its offensive philosophy and become a more power-hitting team to match the skills of its productive hitters.

Top-seed and defending champion Post 176 (22-4) demonstrated as much last night when it amassed 11 hits to rally to defeat visiting and second-seed Vienna Post 180, 13-6, at Lee High School in the winners' bracket final of the American Legion District 17 tournament.

AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL

Vienna (18-9) led, 2-0, after the top of the first inning, thanks to a couple of bunt singles and a two-run double by Justin Padgett. In the bottom of the inning, Springfield answered with five runs (four unearned), as Post 176 batters immediately began putting the ball in play with regularity. That continued the rest of the game as Springfield took advantage of four Vienna errors (three in the first inning), nine walks, a couple of misplayed balls and three wild pitches.



Vienna first baseman Eli Facenda holds Springfield's Joey Townsend on first early in last night's game. (Photo by Dave Facinoli)

"Frank [Vienna manager, Werman] went to work on us in that first inning with the bunts and that unsettled us," Springfield manager Al Vaxmonsky said. "They were playing like we use to play and they came out smoking in that first inning. But we changed our philosophy this year because we have much better hitters up and down the order. Our bats came through."

Springfield hitters only struck out three times in the game.

No. 8 batter Wes Stonelake, a last minute addition to the starting lineup, was 2 for 4 with four RBI to lead Springfield. He had a three-run double in Springfield's seven-run sixth inning that snapped a 5-5 tie and broke the game open for Post 176.

Nathan Slater, Dan Allen and Nate Kozlowski all had two hits for Springfield, who stranded 12 runners. Joey Townsend, Alex Carrington and Garrett Wooddell had Springfield's other hits.

Vienna's offense was potent as well, collecting 10 hits and having multiple chances to score. However, Post 180 stranded 14 runners.

"What killed us were the runners left on base and we made mistakes in the field," Werman said. "We had our opportunities."

Chris Hanson, Eli Facenda and Padgett had two hits each for Vienna, Joe Corrigan hit a solo homer, Mario Pomponio had an RBI single and Jay Kenyon

and Mason Hauser had the other hits.

Padgett started on the mound for Vienna and went three innings, allowing the one earned run and three hits. Facenda followed and the lefty, who will pitch at Lehigh, had the Springfield hitters handcuffed with his clever mixing of pitches throughout the zone in his first two innings of relief. Then in the sixth inning, Facenda, sick with a fever the day before, tired and gave up two hits and walked four before being relieved.

"We knew we were going to see Eli tonight eventually, so we were preparing for him," Vaxmonsky said. "Initially he made us look sick up there and was hitting his spots. I really like his stuff. Then when it went, it went quickly."

Right-hander J.T. Williamson started and went seven innings to get the win for Post 176. He allowed eight hits and walked seven.

"J.T. wasn't as sharp as he can be," Vaxmonsky said.

With the loss, Vienna plays No. 4 seed Fairfax Post 177 (14-13) at 7 p.m. tonight at Waters Field in Vienna in the losers' bracket final. Fairfax defeated No. 6 seed Alexandria, 11-1, in last night's losers' bracket semifinal.

The Vienna vs. Fairfax winner will have to defeat Springfield twice in the championship round to win the district and advance to the state tournament in Lynchburg, July 26-30. The district title-round games are at Waters Field at 7 p.m. Thursday and Friday.

Last summer, Springfield defeated Vienna in the championship round.