

Springfield Knocks Off Vienna

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By throwing primarily sliders and curveballs, then mixing in an occasional fastball, Brennan Miller pitched No. 2 seed Springfield Post 176 to a key victory last night in the winner's bracket final of the American Legion District 17 tournament.

The right-hander struck out 14, as he tossed a nine-inning complete game in Springfield's 5-3 victory over top seed Vienna Post 180 (21-5) at Waters Field in Vienna.

AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL

Miller, who threw more than 140 pitches, walked the first batter he faced, then no others, as he allowed eight hits and just one earned run to improve to 8-1 this summer.

"All of my breaking stuff was working tonight," said Miller, a 2009 South County Secondary School graduate, who pitched this past spring at two-year Chesapeake College in Maryland. "I only threw about 20 percent fastballs. "I really wanted to pitch this game."

With the win, Springfield (19-7) advances to the championship round to face the winner of tonight's loser's bracket final between Vienna and No. 5 seed Falls Church Post 130 (11-16) at Lee High School at 7 p.m.

Falls Church rallied from a 4-0 deficit to defeat bottom seed Annandale Post 1976 (7-21) by a 6-4 score last night in a loser's bracket game at Robinson Secondary School in the rain. Kevin Nutter pitched a complete game, fanned seven and walked only one for Falls Church, and Paul Weber had an RBI triple and Kyle Barrand an RBI double.

Falls Church scored the winning runs in the eighth.

"It was kind of a gutty performance on our part," Falls Church manager Ray Zdancewicz said. "We just kind of scratched out a win. We never expected Kevin to go nine innings, but he pitched well."

Starting pitcher Driss Bernoussi hit a three-run homer for Annandale in the third inning and worked seven innings, and Bobby Klein doubled and took the loss in relief.

Red-hot Springfield, which has won 12 straight games, has finished second in the tournament the past two seasons.

"It was all him tonight," Vienna manager Frank Werman said in regard to Miller. "We never got anything going. We made four mistakes, and in a game like this you can't make those mistakes."

Miller allowed an unearned run in the first inning as a result of an error, then two runs in the sixth on a couple of misplayed balls. After that, he retired 10 of the last 11 batters, six on strikeouts. Vienna's No. 3 and 4 hitters were a combined 1 for 8 against Miller, with five strikeouts.

"He was money tonight," Springfield manager Al Vaxmonsky said about Miller. "He is a heck of a competitor, and has so much heart and desire to win."

Springfield scored three runs in the third inning and added one each in the fourth and ninth. Nick Digby (2 for 4) had a two-run single in the third and a sacrifice fly in the ninth. Joe Townsend (2 for 3) had an RBI single in the fourth. Hunter Bronder (2 for 4) scored in the third on a wild pitch/dropped ball situation.

Springfield had 10 hits, was aided by a couple of wild pitches and passed balls and survived three fielding errors.

For Vienna, starting pitcher Eli Facenda (6-1) worked six innings to take the loss and had two hits, as did Justin Puentes



Left, Eli Facenda took the loss for Vienna and Brennan Miller, right, picked up the win for Springfield. (Photos by Dave Facinoli)

and Scott Bernier. Mason Hauser had a double and Matt Chandler singled. Facenda struck out five

Vienna now must win three straight games to emerge as the district tourney champ and advance to the state tournament in Danville. Post 180 last won the district tourney in 2007, and was second in 2006 when Springfield last won the title.

Earlier in the district tournament for Falls Church, right-hander Greg Goldsmith (7-1) struck out nine, walked two and allowed six hits as he pitched a complete game in Post 130's 9-0 first-round win over Alexandria Post 24.