

Big Green notches 1st win of year

Written by Bob Weber

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btzweber@bright.net

FT. JENNINGS - Wednesday night, the Ottoville Big Green traveled down Route 189 to take on their neighbors, the Fort Jennings Musketeers, under the first-year leadership of head coach Eric Schwab. The Musketeers came into the game undefeated with a doubleheader sweep over Lima Senior and a close victory over the Elida Bulldogs. The Big Green wanted to bounce back after O-G blanked them 8-0 the evening before in Glandorf.

The Big Green jumped out to an early lead and hung on to notch their first victory on the year, 4-2 over the Musketeers.

The first inning started quickly for the Big Green as senior Derek Schimmoeller singled up the middle to lead off the game. Fellow senior Jacob Turnwald was hit by a pitch. Junior Luke Schimmoeller bounced into a fielder's choice, putting the Schimmoeller boys on the corners and bringing up senior cleanup hitter Bryan Hohlbein. He delivered by driving a deep double to center field, plating D. Schimmoeller for the first Big Green run of the game. The Musketeers squashed the remaining threat in the inning and trailed 1-0.

After the Big Green retired the Musketeers in the bottom of the first, they came right back in the second to push their lead to 3-0 over the home team. After senior Cory Fischer grounded out, junior Alex Horstman and senior Craig Odenweller singled and then advanced to third and second on stolen bases. The Musketeers got D. Schimmoeller to pop out to second base but Turnwald lined a base hit to center field, scoring both Horstman and Odenweller to push the lead to 3-0.

The first four innings found Big Green starting pitcher D. Schimmoeller holding the Musketeers hitless; the only runner to get on base was junior Ryan Rau with a walk in the second inning.

Heading into the fifth inning, the Big Green and head coach Tony Castronova faced a big dilemma; Schimmoeller was working on a no-hitter but he and his fellow seniors needed to leave the game because of their senior class trip to New York. Schimmoeller convinced his classmates and the coaching staff to stay one more inning.

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The fifth inning started off harmless for the Big Green as Schimmoeller struck out Rau to lead off. Sophomore Mark Metzger came to the plate and on the first pitch, sent a slow grounder down the third-base line. Schimmoeller got to the ball but sailed his throw over the first baseman Zach Weber's head and Metzger was off to the races, advancing all the way to third. Metzger scored when junior Josh Wittler grounded out to first base for a 3-1 deficit.

With the no-hitter still in place, the seniors packed up and headed to see the bright lights of New York City and passed the torch to the underclassmen to finish off the game

Horstman replaced Schimmoeller on the mound for the final two innings. He started the bottom of the six by hitting sophomore Connor Wallenhorst. Junior Dylan Van Loo sacrificed him to second and junior Alex Vetter delivered a clutch 2-out single to score Wallenhorst, cutting the Big Green lead to 3-2. Gone was the no-hitter for the Big Green.

The Big Green got a big run in the top of the seventh inning when sophomore Joel Beining and freshman Jarrod Fanning both singled with one out. Horstman stepped to the plate, hoping to help his cause on the mound, and sent a hard ground ball to shortstop that looked like a sure double play but the throw to first pulled the first basemen off the bag, keeping the Big Green rally alive. With two outs and runners on the corners, sophomore Trent Miller came to bat but before he even saw his first pitch, Horstman broke from first base and forced the Musketeer pitcher, Rau, to make a decision. He did everything right in keeping the Big Green runner at third but his eventual throw to second to get Horstman was dropped, allowing Beining to score a big fourth run for the visitors.

The Big Green retired the Musketeers in the bottom of the seventh to notch their first win on the year.

Castronova breathed a sigh of relief after the game: "Derek pitched a heck of a game tonight and Jacob and Bryan delivered some big hits for us. Even though it was a non-league game for us tonight, it's still a big rivalry and nice to get our first win on the year. Seniors were all in a big hurry with the senior trip in the back of their minds but I give them a lot of credit, giving me five strong innings tonight. We put the young guys in and they stepped up made plays, and finished off the game for us." .

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The Big Green (1-1) are right back in action 5 p.m. today as they host Ayersville. The Musketeers (3-1) will travel to Lincolnview.

Ottoville

Derek Schimmoeller 3-1-1-0, Joe VanOss 1-0-0-0, Jacob Turnwald 3-0-1-2, Wesley Markward 0-0-0-0, Luke Schimmoeller 4-0-2-0, Bryan Hohlbein 3-1-1-1, Kyle Bendele 1-0-0-0, Brandon Boecker 4-0-1-0, Kyle Bendele 1-0-0-0, Joel Beining 4-1-1-0, Cory Fischer 3-0-1-0, Jared Fanning 1-0-1-0, Alex Horstman 3-1-1-0, Craig Odenweller 3-1-1-0, Trent Miller 1-0-0-0 Totals 35-4-11-3

Fort Jennings

Dylan Van Loo 2-0-0-0, Alex Sealts 3-0-0-0, Alex Vetter 3-0-1-1, Kurt Warnecke 3-0-0-0, Ryan Rau 2-0-0-0, Mark Metzger 2-1-0-0, Josh Wittler 3-0-0-1, Spencer Dray 3-0-0-0, Conner Wallenhorst 3-1-0-0 Totals 24-2-1-2

Score by Innings:

Ottoville 1-2-0-0-0-0-1 - 4

Ft. Jennings 0-0-0-0-1-1-0 - 2

WP - D. Schimmoeller; LP - Rau. Doubles: Ottoville - Hohlbein, Boecker.