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High school softball

Argylls dominate to win second-straight Grant Four

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The Madison-Grant softball team waits at home plate for junior Elizabeth Lee after she slugged a two-run homer in the Argylls' 14-3 win over Eastbrook in a Grant Four semifinal. M-G defeated host Oak Hill 11-1 in finals to win its second-straight Grant Four championship.

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CONVERSE — Madison-Grant is proving to be the top offensive team in the Central Indiana Conference, and the Class 2A No. 5 Argylls put their hitting prowess on display in winning their second-straight Grant Four championship in convincing style at Oak Hill on Saturday.

M-G put together back-to-back seven-run innings in earning a 14-3 over Eastbrook in the semifinals, then pounded out 17 hits and scored multiple runs in three frames in earning an 11-1 win over host Oak Hill in the championship. Both games lasted just five innings.

“We had good pitching, pretty good defense and obviously we scored a bunch of runs,” said M-G coach Travis Havens. “We’ve had a couple games we didn’t hit the ball that well so we kind of focused on some things, asked our kids to be aggressive, be energetic and have excitement again and they did. They were pumped for this tournament and this weekend.”

Junior Elizabeth Lee limited a very good hitting Eastbrook team to just five hits and kept the Panthers off the scoreboard until RBI doubles for juniors Chloe Poe and Addison Coates helped lead to a three-run fifth inning for Eastbrook.

Lee also slugged a two-run homer and drove in three runs total in helping herself get the win. She finished with seven strikeouts and only two walks in the circle.

Senior Chelsea Parker and freshman Carley Holliday each had two of M-G’s nine hits. Daya Greene had three RBI and scored two runs. Holliday drove in two and scored twice while Parker had an RBI and scored once. Katie Duncan added a double.

Poe and Coates had two hits apiece for the Panthers.

Oak Hill quickly manufactured a run in the top of the first of the championship, but Duncan was lights out in the circle for the second consecutive game for M-G. She had five strikeouts, no walks and allowed only two hits in five innings.

Parker led the Argylls’ offense by going 3-for-3 with a homer, double, three RBI and three runs scored. Greene added two hits and drove in two more runs while Holliday added two more hits, including her fifth home run of the season. Chelsea Bowland had a 4-for-4 game with a pair of stolen bases, an RBI and a run scored.

The Argylls entered and ended the Grant Four hitting better than .400 as a team, which is best in the CIC and the .409 is in the top 25 in the state.

Havens said his team’s hitting ability sometimes makes it difficult to fill out a line up card every day.

"It's interesting. We sit down and talk almost daily about who to bat or not to bat, or who to pitch or not to pitch," he said. "It's not an easy to decision, ever. It's a good problem to have, but it's tough when you've got to decide who to sit out. It's not easy but it is a good problem to have."

Lee leads the team in batting average at .514, Duncan is next at .500 and both with more than 32 at bats. Bowland (.478), Anzlee Thomas (.478), Greene (.455), Holliday (.455) and Parker (.422) make M-G's lineup formidable from top to bottom.

Eight different Argylls have driven in 11 runs or more with Thomas (22) and Parker (21) leading the way. Greene has 14 stolen bases, Bowland has 13, and both have scored 23 runs. M-G has 47 stolen bases so far this spring to go with 30 doubles and 14 dingers.

"They feed on walks," said Oak Hill coach Ben Johnson of M-G, who has accumulated 63 walks, but only had two against the Eagles. "If you walk them, they place their bunts beautifully or they're just going to straight steal on you. ... That's a confident coach and a veteran and good team."

Oak Hill's hits were singles against M-G were singles by freshman Madison Archer and senior Treniti Thurman.

Oak Hill had 11 hits in a 6-5 win over Mississinewa to reach the Grant Four championship game. Archer, Nikki Alston and Maxy Pittman each had two hits apiece.

With Eagles' ace pitcher, freshman Karsyn Wiley, nursing an injury, Archer made her first varsity start in the circle and earned the win. She twirled five innings, allowed only three hits, three earned runs and two walks with four strikeouts. Sophomore Macie Foustnight allowed one hit, a run and had one K in her two innings.

While seniors Thurman, Alston and Mia Edwards are playing key roles for Oak Hill and will be hard to replace next season, Johnson is excited by his young team.

"(Pittman) had our only returning innings as pitcher and only had five last year," Johnson said.

"We're really excited when we start with Karsyn at the top, throw in Archer is pitching confident. Those were her first varsity innings pitching and you saw what she could do. We know what have in Karsyn, she's a heck of a pitcher and a heck of a bat.

“On defense we committed a lot of errors the first few games. We weren’t communicating all the outs,” he added. “Watching us communicate in this game, even when were down 5-1 or 6-1, continuing to slide into the right position, continuing to back up, watching our young girls do that had me pleased. We have more double plays already this year than any other season combined. That’s a lot of credit to (sophomore Alivia) Shaw and (sophomore) Tay Holloway up the middle and Pittman doing a good job stretching at first.”

Madson-Grant 6, Oak Hill 3

The Argylls and Eagles ran-it-back Tuesday in a CIC meeting at Oak Hill. Wiley returned to the circle for Oak Hill and surrendered 12 hits but only six runs.

Still, a three-run fifth inning gave the Argylls a 5-3 lead before Parker’s solo home run in the seventh plated the final run as M-G improved to 4-0 in the conference.

Freshman Demie Havens had three of M-G’s 12 hits, including a double. Greene added a pair of knocks. All nine players in the Argylls’ lineup had at least one hit and five players drove in a run.

Edwards and Archer each had two hits for Oak Hill. Thurman, Archer and Evie Holz each had an RBI.

Oak Hill (8-7, 2-2 in CIC) visits Elwood on Thursday.

Madison-Grant (13-2, 4-0) travels to Blackford Thursday.

Scott Hunt