

INDEPENDENT SPORTS

THURSDAY, JUNE 29, 2023

Wildcats clinch North Central Conference baseball championship!

Humboldt edges Webster City, 4-3

By PHIL MONSON

Led by a gutty pitching performance from Ty Gargano and some timely hits, the Humboldt baseball team clinched the North Central Conference championship by edging the Webster City Lynx, 4-3 in Humboldt last Friday night (June 23).

With league games remaining this week against CGD (June 26), St. Edmond (June 28) and Iowa Falls-Alden (June 29), Humboldt can win the NCC outright this week with a victory in any one of those contests.

"That was a gutty pitching performance by Ty Gargano. He did a phenomenal job on the mound for us. He went out there all night long and battled," Humboldt's 24-year head coach Jason Thurm said. The victory improved the Wildcats' record to 19-3 overall, 11-0 in the NCC.

It is Humboldt's first NCC crown since 2016, when Humboldt went 14-0 and fin-

Humboldt blanks Cowboys to claim outright championship!

The Wildcats claimed the outright North Central Conference championship by shutting out the Clarion-Goldfield-Dows Cowboys, 11-0 Monday night (June 26) at Clarion.

Humboldt, 20-3 overall, 12-0 in the NCC, was led by Jayden Gargano, who pitched a no-hitter. Corey Dettmann tripled and singled and Christian Lee drove in three runs for the Wildcats.

ished 25-8. They were third a year ago at 10-4 and were second in 2019, 2020 and 2021.

"Defensively it was a little bit of a struggle for us tonight. Uncharacteristically we put up some numbers up there in the third (error) column, and yet, we were still making plays out there in the field, which is what we've done all year long," Thurm said.

"The big thing is, when we do make a mistake, it's not put your chin down and feel sorry for yourself. It's flush and move on to the next play and that's what good teams do,"

Thurm said. "It's about grinding it out. A phenomenal effort tonight."

"In both the sixth and seventh innings we had situations. In the sixth we thought we had a chance to end it with a double play and we couldn't get the ball out of the glove," Thurm said. "Josh made a heads up play and that's something, if you watch our pre-game infield, it's something we work on, that infield fake. Time after time after time of doing it, it came to fruition there. We did a nice job with the rundown for the out."

NORTH CENTRAL CONFERENCE BASEBALL STANDINGS

As of June 25

	Conf	All
Humboldt	11-0	19-32
Clear Lake	8-3	12-9
Webster City	7-4	12-14
Algona	6-5	11-14
Hampton-Dumont-CAL	6-5	13-11
Clarion-Goldfield-Dows	3-9	8-18
FD St. Edmond	3-9	3-14
Iowa Falls-Alden	1-10	4-13

The Wildcats finished with seven hits on the night as Evan Hatcher went 3-for-3 with two doubles and a single. Mason Van Pelt hit a triple and Josh Thurm also doubled.

Trailing 3-1 after three innings, Christian Lee led off for HHS in the fourth and was hit by a pitch. Hatcher followed with a double to leftfield. Coen Matson struck out in the next at bat then Van Pelt followed by slugging a triple to the left-field corner to score two runs and tie the game at 3-3.

Dettmann scored the go-ahead run for Humboldt in the bottom of the sixth on a sacrifice fly to centerfield by Josh Thurm. Dettmann opened the sixth when he reached on a

SEE BASEBALL, 2B



Humboldt senior pitcher Ty Gargano pitched all seven innings in the Wildcats' 4-3 victory over Webster City on June 23 in Humboldt. The triumph clinched a share of the North Central Conference championship with three league games left in the season this week. Independent photo by Phil Monson. To buy this photo and more from our gallery, visit our website at www.humboldtnews.com.

Wildcat girls stay in NCC contention with 4-3 victory

Humboldt will host Algona in 3A regional opener July 6

By PHIL MONSON

Before the current high school softball team began, Humboldt head coach Erica Post talked about playing fundamentally sound and setting high goals.

Entering the final week of the regular season, Post and her Wildcats continue to impress and surprise others as they contend for the North Central Conference title.

Last Friday night (June 23) in Humboldt, the Wildcats cleared a big hurdle by handing the Webster City Lynx a 4-3 setback, avenging a 4-2 loss at Webster City back on June 5.

The triumph improved Humboldt to 14-9 overall, 9-2 and in a tie with Fort Dodge St. Edmond for first in the league standings. Humboldt can win

the title outright this week with victories at Clarion (June 26), St. Edmond (June 28) and at home with Iowa Falls-Alden (June 30).

Gracie Lyon's sacrifice bunt in the bottom of the sixth inning scored Addie Thompson to lift the Wildcats over the Lynx.

"We came out tonight knowing we had to win the game to continue to be in the race for the conference title," Post said. "We had a little of a rough first inning. We were a little nervous and gave up those two runs and fell behind. But I don't think we ever lost confidence."

"I went out and told them we had to score to win and the girls came back and tied the game, then we continued to put on runs and give ourselves a lead.

When they tried to cut the lead in half to make it 4-3, our kids were solid. They played great defense and continued to put pressure on them offensively and that's all you can ask for," Post said.

The Wildcats collected six hits in the game as Paige Opheim led the way by going 2-for-3 at bat with a double and an RBI. Reagan Lee homered. Jayden Kutschara, Addie Thompson and Mia Schluter each had a hit for the Wildcats.

The 12-15 Lynx played two runs in the top of the first inning before Humboldt added two in the fourth. Humboldt tacked on two more runs in the bottom of the fifth inning before the Lynx added a run in the sixth to make it 4-3.

Humboldt junior pitcher Reagan Lee threw all seven innings and gave up six hits, two earned runs, no walks and struck out four.

Post says her young team has shown maturity and focus as they take it one game at a time.

"We can't look ahead. If you look ahead, somebody right

NORTH CENTRAL CONFERENCE SOFTBALL STANDINGS

As of June 25

	Conf	All
FD St. Edmond	9-2	18-11
Humboldt	9-2	14-9
Webster City	8-3	12-15
Clear Lake	6-5	7-9
Hampton-Dumont-CAL	5-6	7-13
Algona	4-7	7-10
Clarion-Goldfield-Dows	2-10	5-14
Iowa Falls-Alden	1-10	2-15

in front of you will get you. We'll get right back at it the next week on our drive to win the North Central Conference championship. We have to be ready night in and night out. One team at a time," Post said

HHS 8, Tigers 5

Paige Opheim hit two homers and drove in five runs to lead the Wildcats past Spencer, 8-5 in non-conference play at Spencer on June 22.

Opheim led an 11-hit Wildcat attack that included a home run by Elsie Hubbell. Opheim also hit a double for the Wildcats.

Reagan Lee pitched seven innings scattering 13 hits and striking out five with no walks.

SEE SOFTBALL, 3B



Humboldt pitcher Reagan Lee (left) and her teammates celebrate after the Wildcat softball team defeated Webster City, 4-3 in Humboldt on June 23 to stay in the hunt for a North Central Conference title. Independent photo by Phil Monson. To buy this photo and more from our gallery, visit our website at www.humboldtnews.com.

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