



By Russ Pankonin

The Imperial Republican

The Lady Longhorn varsity softball team found wins elusive in their last five outings.

The team played host to Cozad Tuesday, Sept. 18, followed up by a doubleheader in the Gothenburg tournament at Ogallala Thursday, Sept. 20 and a doubleheader at Scottsbluff Saturday.

Coach Denise Smith said it was a tough week, noting they came up against some tough Class B teams and a Gothenburg team that's 21-4.

She was hoping they would be able to raise the level of their game to their competition.

Unfortunately, the Lady Longhorns had trouble making contact with the ball.

Cozad

In their game against Cozad, the Lady Longhorns could only manage one hit by Ally Vrbas in the final inning of the game.

Aided by seven errors by the Lady Longhorns and 14 hits of their own, Cozad put 18 runs on the board over four innings to defeat Chase County 18-0.

Gothenburg tourney

In their opener against McCook at the Gothenburg tourney, the Lady Longhorns could only muster one hit by Vrbas again.

Smith said McCook kept putting down slap bunts and her girls had trouble fielding them or knowing where to go with the ball when they did field the bunts.

McCook posted five runs in the first and five in the third to put the game away after three, 10-0.

In the finale against Gothenburg, the Lady Longhorns got seven base runners over the course of six innings, with Cassie Burpo getting a leadoff single in the bottom of the first.

Burpo reached base again in the third on an error and made her way round the bases, aided by a single from Anna Bauerle and then stealing home.

Bauerle added a triple in the fifth to bring home Vrbas, who got on with a two-out single. Those two runs weren't enough to keep up with Gothenburg. They scored 11 runs over six innings on 8 hits and 12 Chase County errors, seven of which were throwing errors.



Scottsbluff

Saturday, Chase County gave up a pair to the Scottsbluff Bearcats, falling 3-15 in the first game that only went three innings, and 6-15 in the finale.

In the opener, Burpo hit a lead-off single to open the game and rounded the bases on hits by

Vrbas and Michaela Space.

In the third, Bauerle reached on a walk and got scored on a double by Jodi Koellner. Abbi Vetter followed up with another double to bring Koellner in to score, accounting for the Lady Longhorns three runs in the game.

Scottsbluff scored 15 runs on 15 hits while the Lady Longhorns gave up just four errors.

In the second game, Chase County opened with two runs by Vrbas and Bauerle, who got on base with walks and got home on walks.

Scottsbluff answered with seven runs in the bottom of the first inning to open a 7-2 margin.

In the top of the second, Emma Mollendor, Burpo and Vrbas all got free passes. Two more walks and a pair of passed balls brought all three home.

Vrbas scored the final Chase County run in the top of the fourth after leading off the inning with a single.

Smith said her team hit the ball better in the second game but had trouble fielding the ball, committing 13 errors.

Jayvee action

In jayvee action against Cozad, the Lady Longhorns came up with a win, defeating Cozad 17-13 in a three-inning game.

After Cozad put up eight runs in the top of the first, the Lady Longhorns answered with nine runs.

Cozad put up five in the second but Chase County answered with eight more, en route to the 17-13 win.

The jayvees played a double header at McCook Tuesday and the varsity will travel to Holdrege today (Thursday) for games with Holdrege and Grand Island Central Catholic.

Districts next week

Today's game will be the final regular season outing for the softball girls.

They will go into the C-6 double-elimination district tournament at Oct. 4-5 at Gothenburg.

With a 2-22 record, Smith expects the team to be seeded fifth and could see Chadron in a rematch.

Other teams in the tournament include: Blue Hill, Minden, Southern Valley/Alma and St. Paul.