



By Russ Pankonin

The Imperial Republican

Imperial's 16-and-under baseball team got off to a great start last week, winning all five games they played.

They defeated Wauneta in a doubleheader Thursday, June 4.

On Friday, June 5, they pounded Benkelman and on Monday they took another doubleheader, this time from McCook.

Coach Brad Moline said the kids have played well. They hit the ball especially well in the first three games and battled through some lackluster hitting to defeat McCook.

Wauneta

In the season opener, Imperial defeated Wauneta 7-4.

Trailing 2-0 going into the bottom of the second, Imperial marched six runners around the bases.

Wauneta answered with a pair in the top of the third to pull within two, 6-4.

Imperial's defense retired the Wauneta side in order in both the fourth and fifth innings to nail down the win.

An additional run by Imperial in the fourth made the final 7-4.

In the nightcap, Imperial took a 9-8 win for the sweep.

After giving up three runs on errors in the top of the second to trail 3-2, Imperial scored five while leaving a pair on base to regain the lead 7-3.

Wauneta scored two in the third and Imperial answered with one to hold an 8-5 lead.

The visitors added a run in the fourth and two more in the top of the fifth to tie the game 8-8.

With one out, Kale Gockley reached base on a walk.

Adam Moline followed with a single to advance Gockley. Daniel Regier got a walk to load the bases and Jeff Banks brought in the winning run with a single for the 9-8 win.

Moline led the hitting with a 2-3 effort at the plate.



Benkelman

In a single game, Imperial defeated Benkelman in five innings 13-3.

Imperial posted five runs in the bottom of the first, boosted by a home run by Hunter Spady.

They added three more in the second, third and fifth innings to end the game on the 10-run rule.

McCook

On Monday, Imperial swept McCook in a doubleheader, winning the first 7-4 and the second 3-2.

Moline said the boys struggled at the plate, getting only six balls out of the infield all night. Despite the lack of bats, they responded defensively to claim the wins.

In the opener, Imperial got out of a base-loaded situation in the top of the first and answered with five runs of their own.

They added two more runs in the second to go up 7-0.

McCook managed a run in the third, a run in the fourth and got two home in the fifth with bases still loaded.

Pitcher Alex Strand struck out the next batter to retire the side and preserve the win, 7-4.

Spady and Cody Cravey each collected a pair of hits in the win.

In the nightcap, Imperial gave up a lead-off double in the first that McCook was able to convert into a run.

In the bottom half of the first, Imperial went down in order.

The locals held McCook scoreless in the second and third while adding one in each inning for a 2-1 lead.

McCook tied the game in the top of the fourth but Imperial was able to answer in the bottom half to regain a 3-2 lead.

Imperial retired McCook in order in the top of the fifth to claim the 3-2 win.

Gockley and Brian Bell collected the only two hits in the nightcap.