

Spring-vacation trip gives Grafton softball team no wins but plenty of diamond time

It's not often that a winless three-game road trip provides much in the way of positives.

But victories aside, the Grafton High School softball team had a chance last week to open the season and enjoy spring vacation at the same time.



"We got a little better as the week went on," Grafton coach Ken Hunt said after his squad played a trio of nonconference games in Foley, Ala.

After starting the season with a 10-8 loss to Foley on April 4, the Black Hawks fell twice April 5 — a 10-1 loss to Louisville Assumption (Ky.) and a 4-1 defeat at the hands of Gulf Shores (Ala.).

"At least we were able to get on the field. That was the big thing," said Hunt, who noted that most area softball teams have been relegated to indoor practices because of Wisconsin's uncooperative spring weather.

"We didn't play that well, but the teams down there are in mid-season. If we played them 10 times later in the season, I think we would win most of the games."

Against Foley, Grafton got off a great start and built an 8-0 lead by the third inning.

After scoring once in the second inning, the Hawks exploded for seven runs on eight hits and two Foley errors in the top of the third.

Back from Alabama and ready to roll

Written by STEVE OSTERMANN
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However, Foley bounced back quickly, scoring six runs on just one hit in its half of the third. Grafton committed two errors and gave up three walks during the rally.

Foley surged ahead for good with a four-run fifth.

For the game, the Hawks allowed eight walks and had four errors.

Season-opening jitters hurt his team, according to Hunt.

“It was our first game, and we had three first-time starters. We also had a couple players trying out different positions,” he said.

Leading Grafton offensively were Emmy Kabitzke, Katie Hunt, Taylor Thiede and Samm Maglio with two hits apiece.

Pitcher Amanda Hunt worked the first four innings before being relieved by Kabitzke.

The next day, the Hawks struggled at the plate in both games.

Against Assumption, they were outhit, 8-3, and fell victim to a six-run third inning.

Grafton scored in the second inning when Katie Hunt singled and came home on a two-out triple by Kate Lennon.

Freshman Morgan Weisflog got her first varsity hit for the Hawks.

Kabitzke took the loss after pitching the first five innings. She was relieved by freshman Abby Stanisch.

In their final game, the Hawks fell behind early and couldn't recover. Gulf Shores scored twice in both the first and third innings.

A third-inning scoring came on a two-run inside-the-park homer following an error.

Grafton got its run in the fourth on consecutive singles by Kabitzke, Lauren Lennon and Thiede.

Kabitzke had two of the Hawks' four hits in the game.

Amanda Hunt pitched the first four innings and took the loss. Kabitzke worked the final two frames.

“We didn't hit the ball particularly well,” coach Hunt said. “The good things was that Amanda and Emmy pitched well.”

Despite an 0-3 start to the season, the Hawks got a taste of competition before opening North Shore Conference competition, their coach noted.

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“It was nice down there. The weather was pretty good, and it helped us shake a little bit of rust off,” he said.

This week, Grafton was set to start NSC play against Germantown on Tuesday, but that game was postponed due to rain. It has been rescheduled as part of a doubleheader at Germantown on April 25.

The Hawks are scheduled to host Homestead in a 4:30 p.m. league game Thursday and host Sheboygan South in a 1:30 p.m. nonconference contest Saturday.

On April 15, Grafton will play a 4:30 p.m. road game against Nicolet.

Image Information: JUNIOR PITCHER Amanda Hunt and her Grafton teammates were able to escape Wisconsin's cold, rainy spring and get their softball season under way during a spring-break trip to Alabama that included three nonconference games. Photo by Sam Arendt