

Bakers' 4th state title

1980

Butt'r Topp tops state

Butt'r Topp's all-tournament performers



Root



Dutcher



Smith



Ege



Sturges

DES MOINES — Since July 5th, nobody has been able to stop Butt'r Topp's fastpitch softball team. And the way the Clear Lake team is playing, maybe no one in the country will this season.

Butt'r Topp wrapped up its fourth state open championship with two victories here Saturday in the rain-delayed meet. The wins, 10-2 over Cedar Rapids Midwest Galleries and 7-1 over defending state co-champ, Cedar Rapids Modern Piping, were the fourth and fifth of the tourney against no losses. They also were the team's 14th and 15th straight victories and gave Butt'r Topp its 33rd and 34th triumphs in the 35 games the Bakers have played since July 5.

Under the new setup, Butt'r Topp will bypass the regional American Softball Association tourney and directly qualify for the national tourney, which begins Sept. 5 in Decatur, Ill. It will be the second national tourney berth for Butt'r Topp, which qualified in 1978.

Butt'r Topp has won 10 tournament titles, seven in a row, and boasts an overall record of 68-16, best ever (percentage-wise) for the club at this point in the season.

"We play more tournaments than any other major team in the nation, so I'd be willing to bet that's the most tournaments anyone has ever won," said manager Paul Espinosa.

As for the state meet, "we hit well and got all the pitching we needed. We had a big following behind us, and we were really pumped up. We played very well," he said.

Against Midwest Galleries, Butt'r Topp's Dale Root, most valuable pitcher in the state tourney, scattered nine hits to boost his record to 25-6 as he picked up his 14th straight win.

Mike Dutcher and Lance Dreesman each col-

lected three hits for the winners, who had 12 altogether. Dreesman socked a two-run triple in the first inning and Dutcher ripped a run-scoring three-bagger in the fourth. Rich Larson broke it open with a three-run homer in the fifth.

Gene Olson improved to 28-7 with a six-hitter in the title game. Meanwhile, his Butt'r Topp teammates belted 11 hits.

Back-to-back doubles by Rich Smith and Bob Sturges got Butt'r Topp's first run in the first inning.

Butt'r Topp scored three runs in the third without a hit as sloppy fielding by Modern Piping was instrumental. In the fifth, four singles produced two more runs. Larson socked an RBI double in the seventh to cap the scoring.

Dutcher, who hit .400 in the meet, John Ege, Sturges and Smith were named to the all-tournament team. Piping's Steve Calvert was named the most valuable player.

Earlier in the season, Espinosa claimed that this year's team was the best Butt'r Topp club ever. And, not surprisingly, he still holds to that view.

"When you mix a few players in the twilight of their careers with some good young kids the way we have, well, that's been the difference. The young kids, Dutcher, Jim and Dave King and Scott Petersen, have had just an unbelievable year. And Bob Harken, our field manager, has done an outstanding job," said Espinosa.

Butt'r Topp's foe won't be determined until the opening day of the national tournament when a draw is conducted.

Modern Piping and Midwest Galleries will advance to the regional tourney in Kansas City, Aug. 29-Sept. 1.

A crash in a street stocks heat race

Knapp; Nielson; Dave Cory, Mason City; Wirth; D.J. Oblander, Mason City.

Butt'r Topp's bid 1980 for state title delayed

DES MOINES — The red-hot Butt'r Topp team of Clear Lake assured itself of a regional berth but will have to wait until this weekend to finish play in the state open fastpitch softball tournament.

Butt'r Topp, seeking the third state crown in the club's history, won three games over the weekend to reach the semifinals. The tourney was slated to be completed Sunday but heavy rain washed out all of Saturday's games, forcing the remainder of the meet to be delayed until the coming Saturday.

Butt'r Topp, now 66-16 and winner in 32 of its past 33 games, will face Cedar Rapids Kirby's in the Saturday morning semifinals at Bomber Park. The championship game is slated for 5 p.m.

The state champ automatically will qualify for the national American Softball Association meet while the runnerup and third-place finisher will get a berth in the regional.

Aug. 29-Sept. 1 in Kansas City. The national tourney is in Decatur, Ill., Sept. 5-12.

Butt'r Topp opened tourney play Friday night with a rain-shortened, 9-1 victory over Bussey. The five-inning game featured, for Butt'r Topp, Dallas Slagle's three-hit pitching, an RBI single by John Ege in the first inning and Dave

King's towering two-run homer in the second.

Then Butt'r Topp "played our worst game of the year," according to manager Paul Espinosa. Still, the Bakers pulled out a 3-2 win over an unheralded Des Moines Hamilton's team on Sunday when a walk, Mike Dutcher's sacrifice bunt and Jim King's run-scoring single produced the winning tally in the sixth inning.

Gene Olson allowed four hits and struck out nine batters to pick up the win.

Butt'r Topp won a key game later Sunday in a 1-0 decision against Cedar Rapids Modern Piping, defending state champ.

Al Rausch allowed no hits and struck out 10 Butt'r Topp batters. But he was touched for a run in the fifth. He hit Dave King to start the rally. Then, on a Dutcher sacrifice bunt, the throw to first was wild and King got to third. Rich Larson lofted a sacrifice fly to score King.

Dale Root's pitching also was outstanding. He gave up just one hit to Modern Piping, struck out three and allowed no ball out of the infield.

The win was Root's 13th straight and gave him 16 shutouts this season. Eleven of those blankings have been 1-0 decisions.

BUTT'R TOPP'S BIG BATS EARN SOFTBALL TITLE

By BOB DYER

Register Staff Writer

1980
Butt'r Topp's big bats continued to boom Saturday at Bomber Park as the Clear Lake entry won the Men's State Open fast-pitch softball tournament with a 7-1 rout of Modern Piping of Cedar Rapids.

Butt'r Topp ripped 10 hits, including a pair of doubles by Bob Sturges, and benefited from six Modern Piping errors in a sloppily played title game. Winning pitcher Gene Olson threw a five-hitter.

A single by Rich Smith, an error and a double by Sturges produced a Butt'r Topp run in the first inning and the winners, who went through the double-elimination meet unbeaten, scored three runs in the third without a hit to put the game out of reach.

Modern Piping made four boots in the third and Butt'r Topp also took advantage of a walk, a hit batsman and a wild pitch.

Earlier in the day, Butt'r Topp, which qualified for the national tournament in Decatur, Ill., Sept. 5-12, took the winners' bracket championship with a 10-2 romp past Midwest Galleries of Cedar Rapids.

Butt'r Topp rapped 12 hits, while winning hurler Dale Root, named the Most Valuable Pitcher in the tournament, spaced 10 safeties.

Modern Piping and Midwest Galleries finished second and third, respectively, and qualified for the regional tournament in Kansas City, Mo., Aug. 29-Sept. 1.

Modern Piping, which battled through the losers' bracket behind the ironman pitching of Greg Bosch, stopped Midwest Galleries, 5-1, in the losers' bracket finale.

All-Tournament Team

Most Valuable Player — Steve Calvert, Modern Piping; Most Valuable Pitcher — Dale Root, Butt'r Topp; pitchers — Al Rausch and Greg Bosch, Modern Piping, Phil Wilkinson, Reames; catchers — Calvert and Rich Smith, Butt'r Topp; infielders — Mike Pallesen, Modern Piping, John Ege, Butt'r Topp, Max Elliott, Modern Piping, Bob Sturges, Butt'r Topp, and Linden Linhart, Cresco; outfielders — Ted Hicks, Midwest Galleries, Denny Ferch, Reames, Mike Dutcher, Butt'r Topp, and Bruce Hotchkiss, Modern Piping.

Butt'r Topp ousted

DECATUR, Ill. — It's all over for Clear Lake Butt'r Topp. After winning 10 other tournaments and posting its best winning percentage ever, the fastpitch softball club wound up a disappointing national tournament by losing 5-1 to Walnut Products of St. Joseph, Mo., here Tuesday.

"We had one bad inning again and we just weren't sharp. Most of the teams are so close here, the ones that have the emotion going usually win. We just didn't have it after losing that first one," said manager Paul Espinosa, whose team closed the season at 71-18 after dropping two of three games in the 24-team American Softball Association meet.

Butt'r Topp had beaten Walnut Products twice during the regular season but held no magic over the Missouri club Tuesday. The losers committed four errors and gave up four runs in the fifth inning.

Walnut Product didn't get a hit in that frame, using instead a walk, sacrifice, a couple of fielder's choices and two errors by Lance Dreesman, who hadn't errored all season.

Dale Root was the hard-luck loser. The Butt'r Topp pitching ace gave up eight runs during the tourney but only one was earned.

There are a dozen teams alive in the double-elimination tourney and Butt'r Topp owns victories over five of them.

Only four are unbeaten in tourney play. Those four are paired for winners bracket semifinals like this: Cedar Rapids Midwest Galleries, a 10-2 loser to Butt'r Topp in the state tourney vs. Clearwater, Fla., and Santa Rosa, Calif., vs. Seattle.

Waldorf women

Defending champ Midland, Mich., was eliminated 3-2 Tuesday by All-American Bar of St. Paul.

R H E

Walnut Products.....000 041 0 — 5 3 1
Butt'r Topp.....000 001 0 — 1 5 4
Herb Lucas and Jim Wooland. Dale Root, Al Rausch (6), Dallas Siagle (7) and Rich Smith.