

Lions baseball team squeak one out against Florida State

Burchanowski, Connolly, and Calpin play key roles in upset victory

by The Lyrically Acclaimed
staff writer

The Florida State Seminoles got a nice healthy taste of the Behrend Lions last weekend in the Maryville, Tennessee tournament, in particular the pinch-hitting pitcher James Calpin of the Lions, the one man wrecking crew of Brian Connolly, and fire thrower Marc Burchanowski.

The Lions took the game by a score of 2 - 1, with both of their runs coming in the bottom of seventh on a two-run homer by Lion pitcher James Calpin.

"It was an incredible win for us," said head coach Paul Benim after the game. "It's just a great day to be alive," added Benim.

Winning pitcher Marc Burchanowski was unstoppable as he threw a no-hitter and gave up only one run on a fielding error in the top of the seventh inning.

Burchanowski, using only a 105 mph fastball throughout the game, had both 17 strikeouts and 17 walks, both new tournament records.

"I just tried to throw as hard as I possibly could," said Burchanowski. "I know I had problems with my control, but after awhile I just ignored the demons and concentrated on throwing strikes," added Burchanowski.

Florida State coach John Doe had nothing but praise for the Lion pitcher Burchanowski.

"Our kids knew that every pitch was gonna be a fastball," said Doe. "I just told them to start swinging before he let the ball go and just to concentrate on getting a piece of it. It just didn't seem to matter what we did. That kid just simply throws peas," added Doe.

The ball game started off a little hairy with both a bench clearing brawl, and the ejection of pitching coach Matt Palisin after disputing balls and strikes with home plate umpire Mills Lane.

The bench clearing brawl occurred in the bottom of the second inning after Behrend outfielder Brian "Schwartz" Connolly was hit by a pitch from an FSU pitcher and

charged the pitching mound.

With the pitching count at 0 - 2, Connolly was hit in the shoulder by a curveball that never quite broke. Connolly then threw down his aluminum bat, took off his helmet and glasses, and ran off toward the mound. The catcher for FSU picked up the baseball bat and tried to slug Connolly from behind. However Connolly grabbed the bat right before it was about to hit the back of his neck and proceeded to break it with two hands over the top of his head. Convinced he had seen enough, the FSU catcher quickly turned and ran off the field.

With one down and many more to go, Connolly went back after the pitcher to destroy.

As Connolly reached the mound, he grabbed the neck of the terrified FSU pitcher who was already on his knees begging for mercy saying, "I didn't mean to do it! I didn't mean to do it!"

After lifting the pitcher into the air with just one hand by the throat, Connolly let the choking hurler down to the ground where he gave him a hard and swift headbutt that left him unconscious and lying in the dirt.

By now the rest of the FSU team began to circle together for one final charge to take down the bitter Connolly.

It's very hard to describe what went on from that point on. All that can be said is that at the end of the brawl only one man was left standing. A large pile of tangled FSU bodies was all that could be seen, with four or five players scattered around the outfield after being hurled through the air.

After the smoke cleared, Connolly scowled at the remaining players on the FSU bench, where he angrily begged them to, "come out and party!"

As the request was denied, Connolly slowly walked off the field to hit the showers as he spoke only three words, "I'll be back."

This may have been the key point to the Lions win, as FSU was left with only eleven players, all of which were from the bench. Behrend only lost Connolly in the brawl who was

ejected, as no other Behrend player tried to enter the fight.

"We knew he wouldn't have a problem taking care of it by himself," said freshmen Kit Bower. "He would have gotten angry at us if we would have tried to help. He likes to handle things like that on his own. We're just happy that he didn't kill anybody," added Bower.

The upset was now prime to take place, as FSU was beaten up and Behrend hungry for the upset.

The only other ejection of the game came in the top of the fifth inning when Behrend pitching coach Matt Palisin was tossed for getting out of hand with the homeplate umpire.

After being asked why he threw out the pitching coach, Lane explained, "I won't take that kind of talk from anybody. He asks me out at the mound if his pitchers can maybe start getting those balls that go right down mainstreet. Then he asks me what's with that magical floating strike zone I got going on, and if I can try to keep it in one place for the rest of the game. When I told him that I was just calling as I see them, he told me that I suck and that I was a disgrace to the game of baseball," said Lane. "That man was begging for an early shower," added Lane.

After the game Lane was rumored to have been seen shouting at the Behrend bus to Palisin, "Let's get it on!" However Palisin was restrained by the rest of the Behrend team.

In the top of the seventh, Behrend pitcher Marc Burchanowski started off by walking the first batter of the inning. The second batter laid down a bunt to Burchanowski which he fielded and looked to throw the ball to first, allowing the lead runner to move to second. As Burchanowski let the ball leave his hands, it sailed a good ten feet over the first basemen's head and one hopped off the wall at the 335ft mark in the right field corner. The runner from second scored easily, with the bunter ending up with a stand up triple.

"Right when I went to throw it I heard a strange voice," said



Behrend athletic trainer Jeff Webster and the rest of the Behrend team watch from the sidelines, as Behrend's Brian Connolly single handedly beats the FSU team senseless.

Burchanowski. "I got distracted a put a little too much on the throw," added Burch.

Burchanowski got out of the inning without any more trouble by striking out in order the next three FSU batters.

Down 1 - 0 in the bottom of the seventh, the Lions needed a miracle if they were to pull off the upset.

Leadoff batter Dylan Stewart weakly grounded out to second base after catching one off the handle of his bat. Ryan Smith followed up by hitting a long fly ball to the right fielder for the second out.

With two outs and nobody on, the Lions needed some serious two out thunder if they were going to pull off the victory.

Jeremy Brubaker calmly worked the count and drew a two out walk to keep the Lion's hopes alive.

As cleanup hitter Marc Burchanowski next walked to the plate, Behrend head coach Paul Benim waved to the dugout for a pinch hitter.

Called upon to take the place of

Burchanowski was relief pitcher James Calpin. The move was not very popular with the fans or any of the Behrend players, as everybody in the ballpark was either in silent shock or screaming at the top of their lungs to get a different batter.

Calpin hadn't seen an at-bat the entire year, not even during practice.

As Calpin reluctantly stepped into the batter's box, he gave his teammates a look of sorrow and nervously stared in to face the pitch.

The FSU pitcher seemingly had no respect for Calpin at the plate, and carelessly reared back to throw a fastball that he left at the batter's eyes.

Calpin closed his eyes and took a swing so hard he twirled around twice and fell to the ground after he had connected with the baseball.

As it was a miracle in itself the ball was even hit, it was more of a miracle that a 50mph wind gust came up behind the batter's box right before contact to carry the weak pop fly through the outfield and just an inch over the left field wall for the game winning two run homer.

Calpin rounded the bases pumping his fist in the air yelling, "Tremendous! Tremendous!" before being mobbed by his teammates at home plate.

When asked of the questionable coaching move of pinch hitting Calpin, coach Benim replied simply, "I just had a feeling."

Calpin was a little more descriptive when describing his game ending heroics. "I knew it was the best move for us to have me bat in that situation," said Calpin. "I was completely confident from the second I got the call. I had no doubt in my mind that I was going to come through. I watched the ball from the pitcher's hand to the barrel of my Easton and just kept thinking, quick hands, quick hands. As I made contact, the ball felt just tremendous off the barrel of the bat. I knew it was gone the second I hit it," finished Calpin.

The win for the Lions moves their record to 8 - 4, while Florida State dropped down to 14 - 1.

Intramural Yodeling

ENTRIES: Deadline is Friday, April 17 at 4:00pm (Entries are to be turned into the IM Office)

ENTRY FEE: \$500.00 charged to your student account

DIVISIONS: Soprano, Tenor, Bass

EVENTS: With goat, without goat

Intramural Mud Wrestling

ENTRIES: Deadline is Friday, April 17 at 4:00pm (Entries are to be turned into the IM Office)

ENTRY FEE: \$300.00 charged to your student account

DIVISIONS: Men's, Women's, Coed

EVENTS: Free style, Greco Roman, Special BONUS Lightning Jello Round

Intramural Belly Dancing

ENTRIES: Deadline is Friday, April 17 at 4:00pm (Entries are to be turned into the IM Office)

ENTRY FEE: \$666.00 charged to your student account

DIVISIONS: Quick, Warp Speed

EVENTS: With grass skirt, without grass skirt