

After loss to Sullivan; Arcola scores 44 runs in two games to improve to 6-2

By Mike Monahan

ARCOLA – Arcola dropped a 7-2 game to Sullivan on April 12, but got the offense going in the next two Lincoln Prairie Conference games winning 23-1 in five innings over Blue Ridge April and downing Cerro Gordo/Bement Monday 21-2. The Purple Riders improved to 6-2 overall and 4-1 in the LPC ahead of Tuesday's game at Arthur Christian and are scheduled to play host to Cumberlnd.

"We strung hits together and it was nice to see every-one hit the ball," said Arcola coach Mike Phillips. "We hit the ball well and cut down on our strikeouts which has been a focus."

The Purple Riders had averaged to strikeout seven times in the first six games, but only 4.5 the last two.

"It is a big win," said Arcola's Tanner Thomas, a sophomore "They are good. We continue to keep getting conference wins. We are hitting the ball really well right now."

What is the key to Arcola having 42 hits in two games?

"Our whole team is not over-thinking it at the plate," said Thomas. "We are seeing the ball and hitting the ball. When you keep it simple it is easy."

Arcola 21, Cerro Gordo/Bement 2, 3 1/2 innings

Arcola scored at least four runs in every inning and bat-



THE ARCOLA BASEBALL TEAM takes batting practice before the first official game at the new baseball diamond at Moore Park in Arcola. The city of Arcola continues to work on the baseball, softball and t-ball diamonds in addition to several other improvements being made at the park. The new batting cages are just part of the renovations. Arcola won the home opener against Martinsville 21-2 on Saturday, April 8. Photo by Nancy Rairden.

ted around all three times taking control with nine runs in the first inning.

The Purple Riders had nine consecutive batters reach base in both the first and second inning.

Brevyn Whisman was the winning pitcher allowing just one hit in two innings and the two runs with four walks and five strikeouts. Braden Shonkwiler pitched the final two innings and allowed two hits with no runs, no walks and four strikeouts.

"Brevyn pitched well," said

Phillips. "Shonkwiler came in and it was nice to see him have a couple of good innings. We didn't have any lapses on defense, but there were a couple of things we talked about that we want to clean up."

Eight runs scored for Arcola with two outs in the first inning with big hits being a two-run single on a 1-2 count by Braden Phillips for a 3-0 lead. Whisman helped his own cause with a two-run single to center for a 7-0 advantage.

Whisman struck out the

Broncos in order in the first.

Already leading 12-2 in the second with no outs and bases loaded Tanner Thomas smacked a grand slam over the fence in center field just to the left of the scoreboard.

"I had two strikes on me and my dad (assistant coach Jeff Thomas) told me to relax and stay calm at the plate," said Thomas. "So, I kind of relaxed and loosened up a little bit and it was a low fastball and I took it dead center, right where it was pitched."

Maybe fans will remember

the grand slam, but they are likely to remember a foul ball in the first inning.

"I hit the foul ball and I had no idea where it went," said the Louisville commit

See **BASEBALL** on page 4

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Arcola softball picks up two LPC victories; Simpson drives in five against Heritage

By Mike Monahan

BROADLANDS – Arcola cruised past Heritage 14-2 in Lincoln Prairie Conference softball action Monday. This came three days after topping Cumberlnd 10-6 at Arcola in another LPC game. The Lady Riders fell to Mattoon 3-1 on April 11.

Arcola, 5-6 overall and 3-2 in the conference, good for fourth place, is schedule to travel to Catlin Thursday to play Salt Fork in a non-conference game and host Tri-County in a LPC contest Friday.

Arcola 14, Heritage 2, five innings

Arcola freshman Ema

Simpson had a heck of a day at the plate as the cleanup batter went 4-for-4 with five runs batted in, a double and a triple.

Arcola scored at least one run in each of the five innings, scoring three in the first and taking control with a four-run second for a 7-0 lead. After three innings it was 11-1.

Keria Hohlbauch picked up the win allowing six hits and two runs, one earned with no walks and eight strikeouts.

Kacie Sisk was 3-for-4, while Ava Simpson, a sophomore (sister of Ema) and Hohlbauch drove in two runs each.

Arcola 10, Cumberland 6

All of the runs were scored

in the first four innings and Arcola broke a stalemate at six with a four-run fourth to win 10-6.

"The first thing we talked about after the game was that we played from start to finish," said Arcola coach Cara Roberts. "We didn't wait until the fifth inning to start to hit. That is good especially coming off a few losses (Arthur-Lovington-Atwood-Hammond and Mattoon). We started hitting the first inning and second inning and we continued to the end of the game. We saw a lot of at-bats."

Cumberland, who fell to 5-8 overall and 2-2 in the LPC, led 3-2 after one inning and 4-2 after an inning and a half before Arcola took its first lead

of the game with a four-run second inning, 6-4. The Lady Pirates, coached by former Mattoon Pride softball coach and Cumberland grad, Wade Bradley, tied the game with two runs in the third. Arcola got out of the fourth when with one out and one the Lady Riders turned a 6 (Reylin Vega,

See **SOFTBALL** on page 6



ARCOLA'S CATCHER, EMA SIMPSON, attempts to tag the runner from Villa Grove at home plate on Friday, April 7. Villa Grove scored on the play and went on to defeat Arcola 6-2 in the game played at Moore Park in Arcola. Photo by Nancy Rairden.

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~ By Nancy Laudon
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~ By Anna Mae Miller
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