

Late Inning Luck

Dragons come up short at state

Coach Michael Barta was 199-71-1 when Andrew Nord came up to the plate against North Scott Eldridge. The Dragons were down to their final out with runners on first and second down 6-7. One pitch later Nord, who said, "I always want to get up in big situations," hit a walk off triple and gave Barta his 200th win. Exactly one week later Barta laid claim to a 205-72-1 record when yet again, Nord came up in a walk-off situation. It was senior night against S. E. Polk. Down to their final out yet again, this time with the bases loaded, Nord hit a walk off single to give the Dragons a 6-5 win.

"Really special, 1 vs 3," Barta said about winning his 200th game on a walk off. "Our team battled that day. Love those types of games the type where you hit adversity and just get tough and absolutely crush it."

To understand how the baseball team came into shape one has to understand what exactly they had to replace from a state championship team: 57.9% of the runs scored, 225 innings pitched, and 18 players. Senior Andrew Nord knew that the team would have to come together early if they wanted to continue the success.

"I think the off-season starts it all," he said. "Everyone is lifting, throwing and hitting together and that creates chemistry. The team year in and year out are family. Everyone loves each other."

Along with fellow senior Peyton Williams, Nord had been a varsity starter since his freshman year, but some players were not

given the opportunity to play varsity until this year, yet they were very prepared, as Coach Barta preached.

"People don't understand the entire senior class waited around and worked for four years until they earned a Johnston baseball varsity jersey," Barta said. They could have quit as soon as they did not play, but they waited and worked to get to varsity.

This all culminated in the State Tournament Quarterfinal vs Cedar Rapids Washington. Johnston had to try to overcome the best game CRW had played all year. It was a game in which Johnston had a multitude of errors. Those combined with how great CRW played ended up in a historic #8 seed upsetting a #1 seed, with Johnston losing 5-7.

After the loss, the locker room was silent. Nobody could have predicted this. Johnston was #1 all but one week of the year and just got upset. Barta knew that this would be tough to address but summed it up perfectly.

"Baseball is a different beast," he said. "It is meant to be played in a series." He said Iowa plays a one-game elimination in the post season. "We had a couple huge defensive blunders and a couple things not bounce our way. I love that team. I think we were the best team in the state, and were ranked 1 the entire season. People that understand the sport realize that on one given day, versus their best pitcher, anyone can win. I think making it to the state tournament in the sport of baseball consistently is a big deal. It takes a lot of work and a commitment to excellence."



1. Junior Ben Shaver swings at a pitch at Des Moines East in a 7-3 win. Shaver started varsity games at catcher when fellow catcher and junior Cade Moss played second base. Shaver hit two homeruns on the season. (Photo by: Julia Merritt)
2. Trying to outrun the throw on a bunt attempt is junior second basemen Evan Risley. Risley was mainly a pinch runner, but when he did bat, he could hit .375. (Photo by: Julia Merritt)
3. Senior first basemen Peyton Williams looks at a pitch in a 15-2 win against Roosevelt. A starter since his freshmen year, Williams was a force in the lineup with a three-year statline of 144 hits, 43 doubles, 11 homeruns, 109 RBI's, a 36/47 K/BB ratio, and a incredible slash line of .360/.493/.612 all while the team won 84.5% of their games. He also was a 2018 All-State Super Team selection. (Photo by: Julia Merritt)
4. Throwing a curveball is graduate Sean Nussbaum. He went from 2 and 2/3 innings pitched and a 10.50 ERA as a junior to a dominant senior. He was a 4A All-State selection with a 9-1 record, 52 inning's pitched, a 2.15 ERA, while holding opposing hitters to a .223 batting average. (Photo by: Julia Merritt)
5. Freshman Ben Wilmes drives a ball against Waukee. Wilmes was a rare opening-game starter as a freshman, even hitting a big-time double in the state quarterfinal loss. Versatile, he played second and third base, and even some outfield. (Photo by: Sierrah Mangra-Dutcher)



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38 Baseball

Story By: Will Burch
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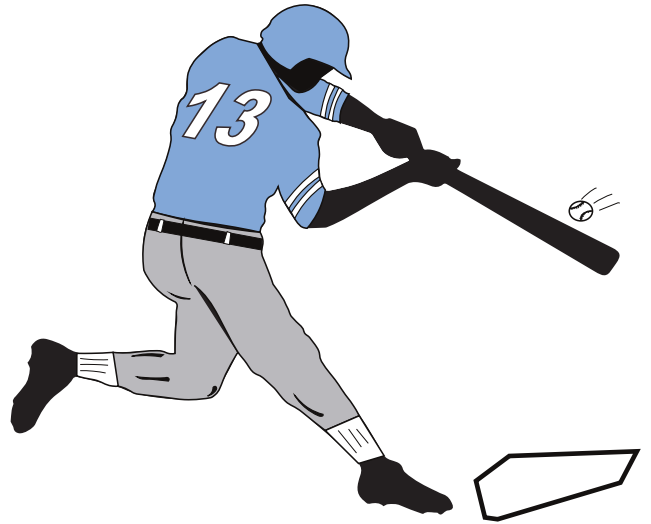
Even Page



Graduate Keaton Duckett rears up to throw against Pleasant Valley. One of the seniors who was a vocal leader in the dugout, Duckett was the best courtesy runner on the team, as well as one of four pitchers to throw over 30 innings. Duckett attended Southeast Community College to continue his career. (Photo by: Julia Merritt)

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|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Ankeny W 11-2 | Ankeny Centennial W 5-1 |
| Ankeny W 9-0 | Mason City W 8-3 |
| DSM Hoover W 17-2 | Davenport Assumption W 8-0 |
| DSM Roosevelt W 15-2 | Pleasant Valley W 4-1 |
| Lewis Central W 10-0 | Marshalltown W 5-1 |
| Boone W 4-0 | Marshalltown W 9-0 |
| Southeast Polk L 2-5 | Cedar Rapids Kennedy W 18-5 |
| Mason City W 11-3 | North Scott Eldridge W 8-7 |
| Mason City W 5-4 | Fort Dodge W 20-1 |
| Ballard W 7-1 | Fort Dodge W 9-1 |
| Urbandale W 10-6 | DSM Roosevelt W 17-2 |
| Urbandale W 7-4 | DSM Lincoln L 2-3 |
| Dowling Catholic L 2-3 | Dowling Catholic W 8-2 |
| Dowling Catholic L 7-8 | Dowling Catholic W 8-0 |
| Ames W 8-2 | Southeast Polk W 6-5 |
| Marshalltown W 9-0 | DSM East W 7-3 |
| Marshalltown L 2-5 | Waukee W 5-0 |
| Fort Dodge W 10-2 | DSM North W 15-0 |
| Fort Dodge W 13-3 | Sioux City East W 10-0 |
| Ankeny Centennial W 15-5 | Cedar Rapids Washington L 5-7 |

Dragons Go Blue



On June 13 the Dragons adorned blue uniforms to celebrate graduate Noah Janssen's 13 years of being cancer free.



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WORK ORDER

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