

# Knights hold on to beat Hopewell

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The Dispatch

Published: Friday, May 22, 2009 at 11:04 p.m.  
Last Modified: Friday, May 22, 2009 at 11:04 p.m.

WELCOME | Mike Lambros walked toward his team with a look of relief on his face and said quietly, “I guess you’re supposed to have one like this.”

North Davidson definitely did Friday night.

Hannah Alexander pitched a three-hitter and Elisha Elliott hit an inside-the-park home run as the Knights held off Hopewell 2-1 in the second round of the 4-A state softball playoffs.

It was the first close game for the Knights (25-1) since they suffered their only loss of the year on March 23 against Southwestern Randolph. The Knights have 18 shutouts for the season and have allowed just 14 runs.

“I told them that’s a mental plus because now you’ve been in it,” Lambros said. “We haven’t had a game like that since the first of the year. Credit goes to the Hopewell team. They scouted us. They knew us. Super job. But Hannah once again came up big for us and Elisha’s home run ended up being the game-winner.”

The Knights will host Northwest Guilford, which beat Davie County 6-5 Friday, at 7 p.m. Tuesday in the third round.

Alexander (13-1) struck out nine and walked one. She had to pitch with a one-run lead from the third inning on.

“It’s a good win for us,” Alexander said. “I enjoy those kind of games. I like intense games. This was an intense one.”

Hopewell pitcher Lindsey Russell allowed eight hits but mostly hand cuffed the middle of North’s lineup and worked out of several jams.

Besides the home run from Elliott, North got most of its production from the very top and bottom of the order. Number nine hitter Shaundee Woosley went 2-for-3 and scored the other run while leadoff batter Amelia Griffin was 2-for-2.

Still, it was enough.

“Our ninth, one and two hitters got the job done for us,” Lambros said. “We got the second run and we got the breaks — 2-1, I’ll take it because if you’re on the one side, not good. You know what I mean?”

Elliott’s home run was somewhat unusual. With one out in the bottom of the second, the North shortstop hit a scorching line drive that hit the ground just inside the bag at first and barely out of the reach of first baseman Stephanie Spain.

Then the ball kept rolling, eventually to the fence, and Elliott kept running all the way around the bases.

“I just got lucky,” Elliott said. “I put it down the line and past her. I thought I was going to get a triple but as I was running the bases, Lambros was telling me to go.”

The Knights seemed poised to bust it open in the third when they loaded the bases with no one out as Woosley singled and Griffin and center fielder Tisha Mahon laid down back-to-back bunt singles.

Katie Vick fouled out and then left fielder Carmen Shilling dropped Robyn Stanek’s fly ball as Woosley raced home to increase North’s lead to 2-0. But that was all the Knights ended up getting.

With one out in the top of the fourth, Russell hit a hard liner to center that went for a triple after Mahon initially slipped on the grass and just missed making the catch. Shilling then drove her in with a grounder.

Hopewell was back within a run but that was as much as the Titans could muster as Alexander retired the last eight batters she faced.

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