

## Melon Juniors pick up a pair of victories

Written by Vinny Benedetto

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The Melon Juniors split four games over the past week, beating Lexington and Cozad.

A 9-1 win over Lexington opened the week before 6-3 and 8-3 losses to Holdrege and Ogallala, respectively. Coach Jake Fecht's squad got back on track on Sunday with a 7-5 win over Cozad.

Gothenburg will hope to carry momentum into next week. A mid-week road game against Shelton/Gibbon on Thursday will be the team's last chance to tune up before a match up at home with Minden on Monday.

Two-hitter stymies Lex

Lexington Pinnacle Bank's only hits on Tuesday evening came in its first and last at-bat of the game. The visitors got on the board in the first after the leadoff batter singled and later scored on a sacrifice fly to right field. It was the only run they scored off starting pitcher Riley Ostendorf, who pitched all five innings and picked up his third win of the summer.

The Melons took over in the second inning, scoring five runs on four hits. Tyler Teide had an RBI single and scored in the big inning, while Dominic Long plated two with a single and stole a base before scoring.

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Ostendorf did not allow a hit between the second and fourth innings and struck out the side in the third. The pitcher expanded the lead in the bottom half of the third with a single that scored Blake Riley, his second RBI of the game.

Pinnacle Bank's first two batters reached in the fourth via an error and hit batter before a fielder's choice and two fly outs ended the threat. Ostendorf struck out the first two batters in the fifth and recorded his final out after a Daniel Kuefner was thrown out attempting to advance on a single.

The game ended in the bottom of the fifth when Brady Harrison scored on a passed ball. Both teams agreed to amend the regular mercy rule in an attempt to finish the game before weather threatened.



Harrison and Teide each ended the day 1-for-2 with a pair of runs scored.

### Late runs lift Holdrege

Holdrege opened the scoring in the top of the first after an early error came back to haunt the Melons. A passed ball and a wild pitch allowed Holdrege to add a second run in the following inning.

The Melons got on the scoreboard in the bottom of the second when Braeden Brundage reached base following a fielder's choice and scored on a passed ball. The home team loaded the bases with two outs later in the inning, but a fly out to left ended the frame.

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Gothenburg tied the game in the third after Dominic Long drew a walk to open the inning. He eventually scored after an error and a passed ball.

Neither side threatened in the fourth, but the Holdrege bats heated up in the fifth. The visitors walked three consecutive times to open the inning before the Melons made a pitching change. Brant May relieved Dominic Long and inherited a bases-loaded jam. Holdrege used small ball to score three with a series of sacrifices.

The Melons got a run back in the bottom of the frame when May doubled and later scored. Long and Riley Ostendorf also reached in the inning, but Gothenburg failed to capitalize.

Both sides went scoreless in the sixth before Holdrege used steals and passed balls to add three insurance runs in the seventh. The Melons were retired in order to end the game.

Melons can't keep lead

Gothenburg scored twice in the first inning of its game against Ogallala on Friday, but Ogallala produced a comeback and took the game 6-3.

After Quinn Haynes retired the visitors in order to start the game, Braeden Brundage, Riley Ostendorf and Bryce Kowalewski hit consecutive singles. Kowalewski's knock plated Brundage before Ostendorf scored the second run of the frame.

Ogallala was quick to respond with some assistance from the Melons' defense. Four Gothenburg errors allowed Ogallala to tie the game without recording a hit.

Gothenburg loaded the bases with two outs in the second but failed to score. Ogallala quickly took the lead with a pair of runs in the third. Two singles put a runner in scoring position when

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defensive miscues struck again.

Haynes got through the fourth without allowing a run, but the hosts again failed to score in the bottom half.

Ogallala extended the lead with an RBI single in the fifth. Errors helped the Melons answer in the bottom half. Ostendorf reached via error and scored when the visitors misplayed a ball off Jordan Wenger's bat. Zander Paulsen extended the inning with a single, but the threat ended soon after.

A leadoff single and two stolen bases led to the visitor's sixth and final run of the game.

The Melons could not generate more than one base runner in their final two chances at the plate.

Melons' bats heat up

Saturday's game at Cozad was one to remember for some of the Gothenburg Juniors, as they earned their fourth win of the summer with a 7-5 victory.

Riley Ostendorf and Bryce Kowalewski each finished 4-for-5 and drove in numerous runs. Both singled in the first inning, resulting in an early, one-run lead for the Melons.

Ostendorf was sharp on the mound, too. Two of his eight strikeouts came in the first inning.

After a hitless Gothenburg second, Cozad tied the game on a single from Cameron Griffs.

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Quinn Haynes singled and stole second to open the third for the Melons. Ostendorf brought him home with a double. Another parade of singles from Haynes, Ostendorf and Kowalewski stretched the lead to 3-1 after three-and-a-half innings.

Ostendorf allowed his second hit of the game in the fourth inning but worked out of the threat without conceding a run. The same could not be said about the fifth, however.

With two outs and no one on, Cozad started an improbable rally, scoring four runs and taking a 5-3 lead. The Melons mustered up two hits in the bottom half but could not score.

Still trailing in the sixth, Gothenburg found some offense. Brundage opened the frame with a walk. Two errors and RBI singles from Ostendorf and Kowalewski fueled a four-run sixth, as the Melons reclaimed a two-run lead.

Radley Shaw came on to pitch the final two innings. Shaw struck out four of the eight batters he faced and did not allow a run. He closed the game by striking out Logan Geiser, who represented the potential tying run.