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Eaglets soar to Battle Creek

St. Mary's strikes early, outlasts Country Day in Division 2 quarterfinals

By Mike Moore
C & G Sports Writer

NOVI — In a game of this magnitude, stealing the momentum early is absolutely priceless.

The Eaglets not only stole it, they cashed it in for a ticket to Battle Creek.

The Eaglets scored 10 runs in the first three innings of their Division 2 quarterfinal June 9 at Novi High and earned a spot in the semifinals in Battle Creek following a 10-3 victory against Beverly Hills Detroit Country Day.

“To get going that early and set the tone for the game was pretty big for us,” St. Mary’s coach Nick Di Ponio said after the win. “We would have liked to keep scoring and hitting the way we did, but we made it work.”

The Eaglets (15-19), return to Battle Creek for the first time since 2007, when they lost in the state final. They’ll face Milan High at noon June 12 at Morrison Field.

“We’re looking forward to it,” Di Ponio added. “A lot of these guys got to experience what this is all about in 2007. This time they want to come away with a different result.”

The loss ended a somewhat magical playoff run for Country Day.

Not expected by many to make it out of the district round, the Yellowjackets (13-8) rolled to their first quarterfinal appearance since 1995. The eye-opening win of their journey was a 4-0 victory against Dearborn Divine Child, the defending state champs, in the regional final.

“It’s a tough loss for sure,” coach Frank Orlando said. “That quick start really hurt us, obviously. ... The thing I won’t forget, though, is the way we battled. Mike (Theodore) pitched his heart out, and our guys never gave up.”

Junior Theodore Piccirilli anchored the Eaglets’ attack, finishing the afternoon with a single, double, home run and three RBIs in four trips to the plate. Junior Korey Hall scored three times. Both players were freshmen in 2007 and played in Battle Creek.

“It’s pretty exciting,” Hall said of getting back to the final four. “We’re looking forward to the opportunity.”



Photo by Tracy Dreslinski
Junior Theodore Piccirilli and the St. Mary’s baseball team earned a spot in the Division 2 semifinals with a 10-3 victory against Country Day June 9. The Eaglets return to Battle Creek for the first time since 2007.

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