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Bucks sweep to UAS title

Late rally helps Bozeman (7-0) avenge last week's loss to Vegas

By Chronicle Staff

In the championship of the UAS Shootout Tournament in Billings Tuesday evening, "everything that could have happened in a baseball game happened," Bozeman Bucks head coach Mitch Messer said. "Rain delays, player ejections, overthrown balls, pickoffs. It was an exciting game."

And a two-out infield single from Ethan Wilkes that grazed

off the glove of Las Vegas Lions pitcher Blair Goldsack proved to be the dagger.

Shortstop Matt Holman picked up the dribbler and fired to first, but his toss eluded new first baseman Nick Kingham and allowed the last two runs to score in the Bucks' 5-4 win over the Lions.

Las Vegas handed the Bucks an 11-5 loss in Bozeman last Thursday — the day before the tournament began.

The previous blemish to the

Lions was only the third time Bozeman has lost in its last 14 games. The Bucks went 7-0 in the tournament and were the only team to go undefeated over the five days in Billings.

"From the beginning of the year our focus has been to get better every day," Messer said.

(More on **Bucks**, page B2)

Bozeman's Doug Crossman is tagged out by Las Vegas' Blair Goldsack in the seventh inning Tuesday at Dehler Park.



COURTESY OF CASEY RIFFE/BILLINGS GAZETTE

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"The guys have done a good job of that. We still have a ways to go, but we're playing good baseball."

Going into a rain delay after the first batter in the Lions' half of the fifth inning, the Bucks led 2-1. But the half-hour stoppage forced Bozeman to pull its starter, Cullen Cameron, who had allowed four hits through four innings, and gave Las Vegas a window of opportunity.

"Cullen was throwing a good game," Messer said. "But he was at about 80 pitches on three days' rest so we decided to pull the plug."

Dillon Peterson came in for Cameron and allowed a double and a triple to the Lions' four- and five-hole hitters, David DeCarlo and Kingham, which led to two Las Vegas runs.

The Lions then scraped another run together off Leister in the bottom of the sixth to stretch their lead to two. The Bucks brought in closer Jamin Weidenaar to prevent any more damage and get out of the inning.

That's when "The Big Bats made

some noise" — a phrase often uttered by Bucks commentator Steve Dent. But it was more like a sequence of peeps than a Fourth of July fireworks display.

Singles from the Bucks No. 4 and 5 hitters Anthony Rinard and Andy Ballinger brought in one run in the top of the seventh to make it 4-3, and a bunt from No. 6 hitter Weidenaar put pinch runner Doug Crossman in scoring position.

Another single from Leister made the inning even more enticing for Bucks fans as it moved Crossman to third.

But a come-backer to the mound from Peterson stranded Crossman in a rundown between third and home and he was tagged out. For reasons unknown to Messer, Vegas first baseman Tommy Barnes was ejected on the play.

"It was crazy," Messer said. "It was just one of those games."

Wilkes, who has been getting starts in left field against left handed pitchers, then hit the grounder to put the Bucks up and Weidenaar, who earned the victory, slammed

the door on the Lions in the bottom half of the inning.

"It feels amazing because they're such a good team," Weidenaar told the Billings Gazette. "To come out and beat these guys is a lot of pleasure for me."

To reach the championship game, the Bucks defeated Eden Prairie, Minn., 7-4 earlier in the day. Caleb Schlender, Rinard and Ballinger each had two hits. Weidenaar hit a two-run single and also earned the save.

The Bucks (32-13) return home to take on the Colorado Bobcats tonight before taking four days off. They will resume conference play with the Billings Royals on Monday.

Bucks 5, Las Vegas Lions 4	
Bucks	001 010 3 — 5 8 1
Lions	000 121 0 — 4 7 3
Cullen Cameron, Dillon Peterson (5), Ben Leister (5), Jamin Weidenaar (6) and Andy Ballinger. Amir Garrett, Blair Goldsack (5) and Jullan Cutolo.	
Bucks — Brendan Phillips 0-3, Kyle Britt 0-4, Caleb Schlender 0-2, Ballinger 2-4, Weidenaar 1-3, Leister 1-3, Mario Stanislao 1-2, Keith Alles 0-1, Peterson 0-1, Ethan Wilkes 1-3.	
Lions — Dontrell Hall 1-4, Brooks Klein 0-2, Tommy Barnes 0-4, David DeCarlo 1-2, Tyler Barnes 0-1, Cutolo 0-3, Billy Santivan 1-3, Kyle Gamble 1-2, Nick Kingham 1-2.	
2B: Rinard, Weidenaar, DeCarlo, Gamble. 3B: Kingham. RBI: Ballinger 2, Wilkes; Hall, Tommy Barnes, Tyler Barnes, Kingham.	

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Bozeman tops Las Vegas to win UAS/Fleetwood tourney
Bucks score 3 runs in top of 7th, win 5-4

By **ED WEST**
Of The Gazette Staff

Entrusting a 16-year-old to close out a game may not be common practice in Legion baseball.

Don't tell Bozeman Bucks or Jamin Weidenaar. The young right-hander got through a couple of anxious moments in the Bucks' 5-4 victory over the Las Vegas Lions Tuesday in the championship game of the UAS/Fleetwood Shootout tournament at Dehler Park.

Weidenaar didn't get a save, instead picking up the victory after Bozeman rallied for three runs in the top of the seventh to take the lead.

Weidenaar sandwiched a walk around a strikeout and a flyout before an error gave Las Vegas runners at second and third. That brought up leadoff hitter Dontrell Hall, but Weidenaar struck him out on four pitches as the Bucks finished 7-0 in the five-day tournament.



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"It feels amazing because they're such a good team," Weidenaar said. "To come out and beat these guys is a lot of pleasure for me."

Bozeman had dropped an 11-5 decision to Las Vegas just before the tournament began.

Messer summoned Weidenaar with two outs in the sixth. The Lions had taken a 4-2 lead and had runners at second and third. Weidenaar got No. 5 hitter David DeCarlo on fly to right to end the inning.

"Jamin's been doing that for us all year," said coach Mitch Messer. "That's a position he wants to be in at the end of the game. In that situation, you give the ball to the No. 1 guy and you go. That's what we did."

That gave the Bucks a chance and they didn't squander it. Andy Ballinger's single cut the deficit to 4-3 and the Bucks took the lead when Ethan Wilkes' grounder glanced off the glove of pitcher Blair Goldsack. Shortstop Matt Holman picked up the ball and tried to get Wilkes, but his throw skipped past first base and two runs scored.

Bozeman couldn't get much going early against Lions' starter Amir Garrett, a tall (6-foot-4) lefty who notched 10 strikeouts. The Bucks did manage to take a 1-0 lead in the third when Wilkes reached on an error and later scored on a wild pitch.

A double by Anthony Rinard and single by Ballinger put Bozeman ahead 2-1 lead in the fifth. The Lions responded with an RBI double by DeCarlo and a run-scoring triple by Nick Kingham for a 3-2 advantage.

Las Vegas had a chance to pad the lead, but Weidenaar helped limit the damage to one run in the sixth and the

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Bucks then staged their game-winning rally.

"I'm proud of the way our guys fought through the end," Messer said. "This was a good win. We set out at the beginning of the year we want to win every tournament we play in. This is one heck of a tournament. Hopefully, we can continue to play good baseball."

Bozeman (32-13) goes home to play the Colorado Bobcats tonight and then gets back into conference play against the Billings Royals on Monday.

NOTES: The championship game had a 39-minute wind and lightning delay in the fifth inning. ... Bozeman beat Eden Prairie, Minn. 7-4 to reach the final. ... Las Vegas hit seven doubles in beating Excelsior, Minn. 10-2 in its semifinal.

Cullen Cameron, Dillon Petersen (5), Ben Leister (5), Jamin Weidenaar (6) and Andy Ballinger; Amir Garrett, Blair Goldsack (5) and Julian Cutolo. W - Weidenaar. L - Goldsack.

Bozeman - Brendan Phillips 0-3, Kyle Britt 0-4, Caleb Schlender 0-2, Anthony Rinard 2-4, Ballinger 2-4, Weidenaar 1-3, Leister 1-3, Mario Stanislaw 1-2, Keith Ailes 0-1, Petersen 0-1, Ethan Wilkes 1-3. 2B: Rinard, Weidenaar. RBI: Ballinger 2, Wilkes.

Las Vegas Lions - Dontrell Hall 1-4, Brooks Klein 0-2, Matt Holman 2-4, Tommy Barnes 0-4, David DeCarlo 1-2, Nick Kingham 1-3, Goldsack 0-1, Cutolo 0-3, Billy Santiwan 1-3, Kyle Gamble 1-2. 2B: DeCarlo, Gamble. 3B: Kingham. RBI: Hall, Barnes, DeCarlo, Kingham.

Bozeman 5, Las Vegas 4

Bozeman 001 010 3 - 5 8 1

Las Vegas 000 121 0 - 4 7 3

Published on Wednesday, July 01, 2009.
Last modified on 7/1/2009 at 12:48 am

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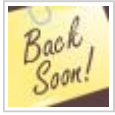
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