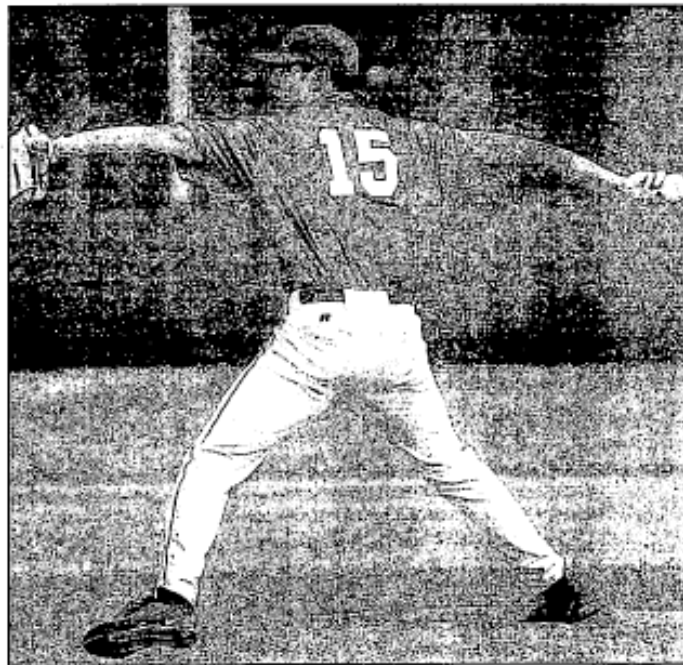
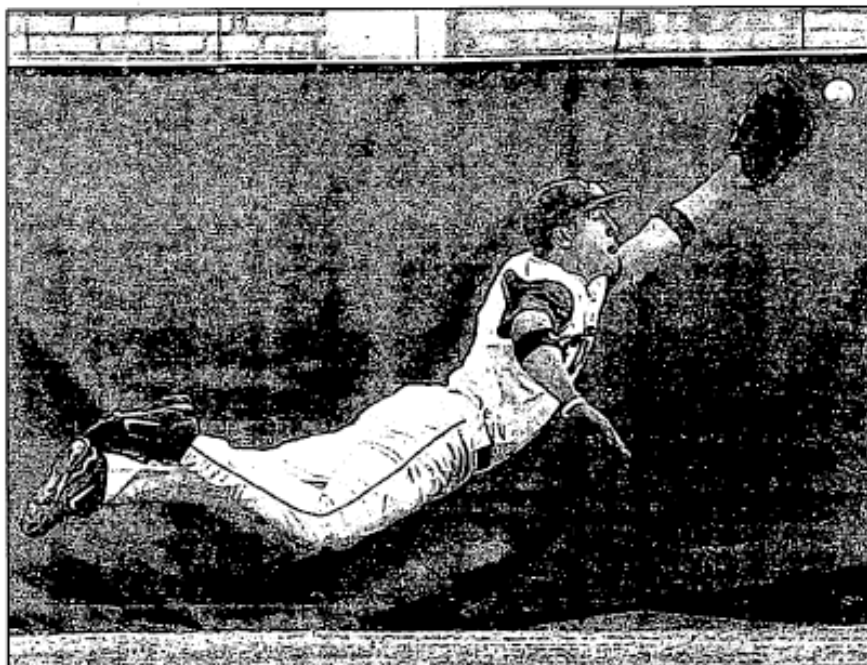


SPORTS



PHOTOS BY GEORGE SMITH

Right, Thunderbolts pitcher Sean Swetsnam may have had a golden arm for Eleanor Roosevelt High School as they won the Class 4A state championship, but he didn't last the inning in this

Express starts strong, holds on 6-3

By Mike Brody
Special to The Sentinel

The Rockville Express had a comfortable 3-0 lead going into the top of the ninth inning of Tuesday's game at the Silver Spring-Takoma Thunderbolts. At the time, the three insurance runs the team added in the frame may have looked like they would only pad stats, but they actually proved to mean a lot more.

In the bottom of the final inning, Joe Maca, Michael Parker and Nick Siega-Riz all reached base before coming home on Joe Fowler's three-run double. But that was it for the Thunderbolts' rally. Alex Peguero and Gerardo Hernandez went down in succession following Fowler's hit, and the Express closed out a 6-3 win in front of 174 at Blair Stadium.

Starting pitcher Dan Francis pitched six scoreless innings for the win but faced multiple threats from

the Thunderbolts early in the game. In the bottom of the first inning, the Thunderbolts had the bases loaded and nobody out but didn't score any runs as Peguero, Hernandez and Sam Goss all failed to deliver.

In the bottom of the second inning, Francis found himself in another bases loaded situation but was bailed out when Nick Siega-Riz grounded into an inning-ending double play.

"We dodged a bullet in the first couple innings," Express head coach Tom Shaffer said. "They had the bases loaded twice with less than two outs, and they didn't score. Kind of killed their drive there at the first couple innings of the game because they could've broken it open, and it would've been tough for us to come back. But again, Dan Francis came out, and he kind of struggled at the beginning of the game but he settled in, and he got us through six scoreless innings to keep us there for late in the game."

The Express picked up its first run in the top of the fifth inning when Mike Zuanich scored off a Pete Faise single. The Express added two runs in the top of the eighth inning, chasing Thunderbolts starting pitcher Jeremiah Meiners. In the top of the ninth inning, Glenn Kiture's two-run single put the Express up 5-0, and Eric Allen scored the team's sixth run on an error by the catcher Hernandez.

Kiture, who had entered the game in the eighth inning, said it's difficult to pinch hit off the bench. "But you got to know your role and be ready at any time," Kiture said.

With Tuesday's win, the Express now has a 20-15 record with less than one week to play in the regular season. "We're right where we thought we'd be," Shaffer said. "A couple games at the beginning of the season, if we would've turned those games around, we blew a couple leads, and we might be in a better position right now.

But again, you can't really do anything about that because we're 20-15, and we're right there."

The team closes out the regular season with three games at Knights Field this weekend. On Saturday, it

faces the Bethesda Big Train in a doubleheader beginning at 1 p.m., and on Sunday, it plays the Maryland Redbirds at 3 p.m. You can visit the team's Web site at www.rockvilleexpress.org.

Rockville 6 (20-15)											Silver Spring-Takoma 3 (17-18)										
Player	AB	R	H	HR	BB	SO	PO	A	LOB		Player	AB	R	H	HR	BB	SO	PO	A	LOB	
Pete Faise 2b	4	1	1	1	0	0	0	5	2		Michael Parker ss	4	1	2	0	1	1	2	1	0	
Travis Rubin 3b	5	3	1	0	0	1	1	3	2		Nick Siega-Riz rf	4	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	
Sam Domestico lf	5	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0		Joe Fowler cf	4	0	4	3	1	0	0	0	0	
Eric Allen cf	3	2	1	0	2	0	2	0	0		Alex Peguero 2b	5	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	
Mike Delencue dh	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	1		Gerardo Hernandez c	4	0	0	0	1	1	5	1	1	
Glenn Kiture dh	2	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0		Sam Goss dh	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	
Mark Tracy 1b	4	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1		Ivan Rodriguez ph	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	
Beau Brooks c	4	0	0	0	1	1	7	1	2		Tim Burchett lf	4	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Mike Zuanich lf	3	1	2	1	0	0	3	0	0		Joe Maca 3b	4	1	3	0	0	0	1	1	0	
Bruce Allen ss	3	0	0	0	1	0	3	2	3		Jeffrey Jones cf	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	
Dan Francis p	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0		Jeremiah Meiners p	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Chris Holt p	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		Clay Burdette p	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Nylon James p	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		Jeremy Zarnop	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Totals	36	8	8	4	5	6	27	12	10		Totals	27	3	12	3	4	5	27	7	11	

Score by Innings	R	H	E			
Rockville	000	013	002-	6	8	1
Silver Spring-Takoma	000	000	000-	3	12	4

E - Faise; Parker; Peguero; Hernandez 2; DP - Express 2; LOB - Express 10; Thunderbolts 11; 2B - Zuanich; Parker; Fowler; HP - Faise; Zuanich; SB - Allen; Kiture; CS - Hernandez