

OV's Pierpont blanks Fair Haven

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BRANDON — Pablo Picasso would have appreciated this one. Fraser Pierpont pitched a masterpiece, a three-hit shutout in Otter Valley's 5-0 victory over Fair Haven in which he struck out nine and walked just one.

"He is effective every game," said Pierpont's catcher Alex Polli. "It is amazing how he hits his spots. He puts the ball exactly where I want it."

Mike Howe was a little worried about how Pierpont would respond to pitching on three days rest after shutting out Burr and Burton Academy 2-0.

Polli thought his pitcher was even better than he was against BBA.

"He was working ahead. I never saw him get through a lineup so quickly," Polli said.

It was a gratifying win because it came against a Fair Haven team that defeated the Otters in the 2019 state championship game and rolled to a 12-2 win over the Otters in the first meeting this year.

"We had lost a couple in a row to them and I told the guys, that's a few too many," Howe said.

The day began well enough for the Slaters with Sawyer Ramey legging out an infield hit to lead off the game.

Polli erased him with a strong throw when Ramey tried to steal.

Polli was 2-for-2 in gunning down runners attempting to steal.

"I am in a little slump (at the plate) so I pride myself on throwing out runners," Polli said.

It was a battle of aces as Fair Haven had Evan Reed on the mound. The game had the earmarks of a classic mound duel, scoreless heading into the bottom of the third.

That's when the Slaters' defense collapsed. They committed three errors in the inning and it opened the door for the Otters to score four runs on four hits.

Andy McEnery, Caleb Whitney, Lane Eddy and Jordan Beayon had singles in the inning to make the miscues costly.

Oddly, OV's big inning was a frame where Reed notched three strikeouts.

"Evan has been so consistent. He pitches hard and he plays hard," Fair Haven coach Adam Greenlese said.

"We made a lot of little mistakes that hurt us."

The Slaters' record falls to 4-6.

"We shouldn't have the record we have. If we eliminated just half of the mistakes, we would have a much more positive record," Greenlese said.

The Otters got over the .500 mark at 5-4.

It was a big win because the Otters and Slaters entered the day next to one another in the Division II state standings.

Pierpont grew stronger as the game went on. Five of his nine strikeouts came in the sixth and seventh innings.

"In the seventh inning, he was lights out," Polli said.

The Slaters had a great chance to break through in the fifth. Ryan Muratorri and Matt Heibler had singles and moved up on a wild pitch, giving the Slaters two runners in scoring position with only one out.

But Pierpont wriggled off the hook by inducing the next two batters to pop up to third baseman McEnery.

The Otters scored their fifth run in the sixth when McEnery singled home Brady Diaz.

Greenlese brought in Tyler Niklasson to relieve Reed with one out sixth. Niklasson gave up the RBI single to McEnery but then got the next two batters on a strikeout and a fly ball to right.

Eddy and McEnery had two hits apiece to lead OV's seven-hit attack.

"Fraser did a great job at Burr and Burton, too, getting better as he went on. A lot of it has to do with confidence," Howe said.

Greenlese isn't counting his team out. He feels if the Slaters cut down on the mistakes, they can play with anyone.

“Come playoffs, it’s anyone’s game,” he said.

He will be trying to upgrade the Slaters before the playoffs arrive and that all starts with a strong Hartford team coming to town on Monday.

The Otters travel to Windsor on Tuesday and then have Springfield coming to Brandon on Thursday.