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Belgrade continues dominance, punches State A ticket



CHRIS KERR/CHRONICLE

Belgrade Bandits' Conner Switzer hits a two-run home run in the fifth inning against the Gallatin Valley Outlaws in Livingston on Saturday afternoon.

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LIVINGSTON — What came first: the chicken or the egg?

What is a bigger pain to Belgrade's Southern A opponents, its hitting or its pitching?

The Bandits secured a spot at the State A tournament and a berth in the Southern A district championship game with a 15-4 victory over Gallatin Valley on Saturday afternoon in the undefeated semifinals. Belgrade (37-17) smacked 10 hits on Saturday to get those 15 runs and has a combined 43 runs on 43 hits in 21 innings thus far during the tournament.

The Bandits' big inning in the semifinal was a five-run second in which Koby Ruff (single), Brett Franklin

(walk), Trevor Mahn (single) and Conner Switzer (two-run single) earned RBIs off Outlaw No. 2 starter Gianfranco Filippini.

The frame gave Johnny Graham's club a 6-1 advantage, and the No. 1 seed also plated seven runs on three hits, two walks and a hit batsman in the fifth. Switzer's two-run homer followed Mahn's two-run triple; it ended up a 14-4 lead after the stanza. Eventually, the Bandits sewed up their 13th 10-run mercy rule win this season against Southern A opponents.

"We've known what we're capable of the entire year; we just do what we do," Belgrade pitcher Brett Franklin

Southern A Saturday

Dillon 5, Bozeman 4
Livingston 15, Helena 11
Belgrade 15, Gallatin Valley 4
Dillon 8, Livingston 5, susp., dark

Today

Dillon vs. Livingston, 9 a.m.
Gallatin Valley vs. Dil.-Liv. winner, noon
Belgrade vs. winner, 3 p.m.

said. "We stick to our approaches, we steal bags – a big part of it is stealing bags and our run game. Just hustle everywhere we go."

While it's one through four hitters combined to hit .583 (7-for-12) with 10 RBIs, Belgrade was also getting a solid

effort from its ace, Franklin, on the bump. The senior right-hander wasn't exactly spectacular as Gallatin Valley left 12 runners on base and the Bandit walked 10 while allowing five hits. But as both he and Graham noted, Belgrade "didn't compound that stuff" by playing solid defense.

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Franklin stuck out seven, and the one inning where the Outlaws (32-20) plated multiple runs — a three-run fifth — ended in the bases loaded.

“It was a real grind-it performance by Franklin,” Graham said. “There were times he was getting out of the zone and he had whatever number of walks.

“But it’s not just a pitcher, it’s all nine of those guys performing as a unit. All of the guys, defensively, didn’t compound that stuff. We made the next play, and that was important.”

Through three games, Belgrade has surrendered just 16 hits and six earned runs. The Bandits did congratulate one another postgame for advancing to the State A tournament again, but it was tempered.

“You know, it’s huge that we just earned a ticket to state. That is big, no doubt,” Graham said. “But right now we’re at the district tournament and our goal is to win district.”

Saturday’s winner agreed.

“Our goal is to go to state,” Franklin said. “But right now, we’re in the district tournament and

we’re going to try to win district.”

Belgrade 15, Gallatin Valley 4	
Gallatin	010 030 0 — 4 6 2
Belgrade	150 171 x — 15 9 2
Gianfranco Filippini, Billy Mourer (4), Conner Van Dyken (5) and Dante Filippini. Brett Franklin and Conner Switzer. W - Franklin. L - Filippini.	
Gallatin Valley (32-20) — Kohler Briggs 1-3, Ryder Kulbeck 1-3, Gianfranco Filippini 2-4, Tanner Johnson 0-2, Justin Woodward 0-3, Conrad Schnur 1-4, Dayne Allen 0-2, Jordan Carlson 0-1, Conner Van Dyken 0-1, Dante Filippini 1-4	
Belgrade — Brett Franklin 1-3, Chris Mitchell 1-3, Trevor Mahn 2-2, Conner Switzer 3-4, Chris Glibreath 0-2, Chris Schrekengost 1-3, Josh Gler 0-4, Jami Olson 0-1, Koby Ruff 2-3	
2B - Kulbeck. 3B - Mahn. HR - G. Filippini; Switzer. RBI - G. Filippini 2, D. Filippini, Kulbeck; Mahn 4, Switzer 4, Franklin 2, Ruff. SB - Briggs; Franklin 2, Mitchell 2, Olson, Switzer.	

Loser-out DILLON 5, LIVINGSTON 5, SUSPENDED: The game was suspended due to darkness with two outs in the top of the eighth. It will conclude at 9 a.m. tomorrow.

The Cubs started off with five runs in the first two innings as Livingston starter Tanner Hall was injured two-thirds of the way through the first inning and reliever Mike Severson was roughed up for four runs on six hits in 1 1/3 innings.

LIVINGSTON 15, HELENA 11: Twenty-six runs, 27 hits and 10 errors

when the contest was said and done.

Yet the hero of the day might have been Austin Carroll. The Braves 17-year-old came to the mound in the fifth and threw four scoreless innings, including the final three of the game, as the Braves (23-28) outslugged the Reps and sent the No. 3 seed packing.

Carroll allowed six hits, three walks and three earned runs, but all the runs occurred in the bottom of the sixth as Helena took an 11-10 edge. Carroll struck out six batters.

Livingston, as it did all game, came right back with a counterpunch in the seventh. The Darr brothers, Hayden and Nolan, combined to go 2-for-2 with three RBIs on Hayden’s single and Nolan’s double in the frame.

Livingston 15, Helena 11	
Livingston	020 350 410 — 15 12 6
Helena	203 303 000 — 11 15 4
Brad Tiefenthaler, Riley Pickens (5), Jack Shevaller (7), Kenny Wilson (7) and Reed Carter, Tyler Simonson (1), Jared Smith (5). Zach Petrich, Austin Carroll (5) and Mike Severson. W - A. Carroll. L - Shevaller.	
Livingston (23-28) — Zach Petrich 1-4, Austin Carroll 0-2, Mike Severson 3-6, Tanner Hall 0-5, Hayden Darr 1-3, Nolan Darr 2-6, Skyler Carroll 2-6, Colton Landreth 1-3, Gunner Lehrer 1-4	
Helena — Jared Smith 1-4, Brad Tiefenthaler 3-5, Nick Wrigg 2-6, Collin Volesky 3-6, Chase Rook 2-6, Zach Merzjak 1-3, Danny Burton 3-5, Kenny	

Wilson 0-2, Reed Carter Kenny Wilson 0-2, Matt Morgan 0-1
2B — N. Darr, Severson; Merzjak, Wrigg. 3B - Rook. RBI - H. Darr 3, A. Carroll 2, n. Darr 2, Hall 2, Petrich 2, Severson; Volesky 3, Burton 2, Merzjak 2, Rook 2, Wilson.

DILLON 5, BOZEMAN 4: The No. 6 seed advanced to live on due to a critical Spikes error.

Leading 4-3 in the top of the seventh, Bozeman reliever Bennett Hostetler walked Christopher Olson and hit both Eathyn Peterson and Cole Miotke with one out. MJ Simkins lofted a fly ball to left and the ensuing play plated both Olson and Peterson due to a misplay by Spike third baseman DJ Perdaems. Miotke came on in the bottom of the seventh and went the final three innings, allowing just two hits and striking out two for the win.

Dillon 5, Bozeman 4	
Dillon	011 010 200 — 5 7 3
Bozeman	012 001 000 — 4 8 4
Christopher Olson, Cole Miotke (7) and Dillon Starkel. Jack Hape, Bennett Hostetler (6) and Jake Willard. W - Miotke. L - Hostetler.	
Dillon — Eathyn Roberts 0-3, Cole Miotke 1-1, MJ Simkins 1-4, Dillon Starkel 1-3, Dillon Womack 0-3, Jamey Richardson 0-1, Gunner LaFrentz 0-2, Logan Wilson 0-2, Christopher Olson 1-3, Nate Simkins 3-3	
Bozeman (14-29) — Bennett Hostetler 1-4, Jenner Kearns 0-4, DJ Perdaems 0-4, Jake Willard 3-4, Jack Hape 1-3, Alex Franklin 0-4, Joel Thayer 1-3, Nelson Brown 1-4, Morgan Hostetler 1-4	
2B - Miotke; Willard. 3B - Starkel. RBI - MJ Simkins; Hape, Willard. SB - LaFrentz, Miotke, Simkins	