

Greater Lowell holds on for win over Essex Tech

Sousa, Trzcienski star in victory



Essex Tech's Ian McBournie dives back to first on a pickoff attempt as Greater Lowell Tech first baseman Kaden Christiansen tries to apply the tag during Tuesday's game. McBournie was safe on the play. (MATT LANGONE/LOWELL SUN)

By MATT LANGONE | mlangone@lowellsun.com | Lowell Sun
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DANVERS — Now in his 36th season as the head baseball coach at Greater Lowell Tech, Dave MacLaughlan is well-aware of the role preparation plays in a team's success.

The 2021 high school baseball season isn't allowing for much preparation. The condensed, shortened schedule means that teams have to get on the field and take their reps on the fly in meaningful action.

On Tuesday, MacLaughlan's squad battled its way out of a tough late-game situation and held on for a 9-7 road victory at Essex Tech.

The Gryphons (2-1) entered the bottom of the seventh with a 9-2 lead, but the hosts rallied for five runs and had the bases loaded with two outs before left-handed reliever Jake Tourpey escaped the jam.

"I thought it was a good game for us until that last inning," said MacLaughlan. "There were problems at the plate, problems in the field, and (Essex Tech) fought right back and didn't quit."

"I feel like we're having scrimmages, because we usually have six scrimmages and we work out all the problems in the six scrimmages. But I think right now, because of the lack of scrimmages, we're making mistakes and missing signs and doing things that we'd correct in scrimmages. It's happening in regular season games. It is what it is, you've got to go play."

Senior Victor Sousa earned the win and delivered a solid start for GLT over 6.2 innings, keeping Essex Tech at bay while his squad provided a large cushion.

Sousa (2-for-4) also helped his own cause with a two-run double over the center fielder's head in the fifth to give the Gryphons a 4-1 lead.

"He's going to have to be someone we rely on," said MacLaughlan of Sousa. "It's a 12-game season, it's a very short season. We try to tell the kids we've only got three or four more weeks."

Center fielder and leadoff hitter Jacob Trzcienski went 2-for-3, reached base four times and scored three runs. He also added a superb diving catch.

Third baseman Ryan Bracetty went 2-for-4 with a double, two RBI and a run scored. Shortstop Omar Caravajal played outstanding defense and had two hits and a run scored.

Essex Tech plated a run in the bottom of the first to take a 1-0 lead. Chris Itz had an RBI single to score leadoff hitter Jack Christianson.

The Gryphons finally broke through in the top of the third with a pair of runs to grab a 2-1 lead. Kaden Christiansen and Tourpey had an RBI in the frame with Trzcienski and catcher Nathan Palladino scoring.

Sousa did his part by facing the minimum amount of hitters from the second inning through the fourth inning. It helped that his defense turned two double plays.

Greater Lowell scored two more runs in the sixth and three in the seventh to get the 9-2 advantage.

Then, the Gryphons learned a valuable lesson in finishing games strongly.

"The loss of last year (due to COVID-19) has caused a tremendous teaching situation, because the kids that would've been backups last year and gone through the teaching situations last year, have stepped into starting roles this year," said MacLaughlan. "So, now you're doing more teaching of what I call the cosmetics of the game."

It didn't always look pretty on Tuesday, but it was a win.