

The Redneck Roundup

Ely Holds Serve. Sweeps 3 from Rednecks at Home

Ely, IA (CNS) - In a time warp reminiscent of the 1991 World Series, the Ely Tzzz won all 3 home games to take a 3-2 lead in the Clemente LCS. Livingston had won the first two games, played in the muggy Redneck Roost. The cooler temperatures and low humidity of Iowa had a chilling effect on the Redneck bats as the Tzzz won two one-run contests and bombed Curt Schilling 7-4 in game five.

Game 3

Jamie Moyer, a nemesis of the Rednecks all year, worked six solid innings and a trio of Ely relievers hung on as the Tzzz scratched out a 4-3 victory. Rolando Arrojo went the distance for manager Buck Miller II, surrendering 4 runs, 10 hits, walking 3 and striking out 7 — a performance that normally would have been enough to earn him a win — but not this day in Iowa.

Mike Piazza opening the scoring with a 2nd inning lead-off home run off Arrojo. It was Piazza's first dinger of the series and only his second hit. The Rednecks answered in the top of the 3rd in typical Livingston fashion.

Eric Young led off with a gap double to right center. Jason Varitek attempted to sacrifice Young to third and wound up with a bunt base hit as Bill Mueller couldn't make a play. Chris Stynes, who had squeezed home a run in game one, then coaxed a walk off Moyer to jam the sacks for Edgar Martinez. In what may prove to be the turning point of the LCS, for once Edgar failed in the clutch. He struck out with three ducks on the pond. Moises Alou got the tying run home with a fielder's choice grounder in the hole at short and Robin Ventura flied out to deep right to end the rally as the Rednecks wasted one of several golden opportunities in the game.

The Rednecks took a brief 2-1 lead in the top of the 4th when Roberto Kelly touched Moyer for a lead-off homer. Young singled and stole second, but Varitek stranded him when he flied to left.

Back-to-back doubles by Carlos Delgado and

Nomar Garciaparra tied the score at 2-2 in the Ely half of the 4th. Arrojo got the next two batters, but John VanDerWahl put the Tzzz up 3-2 with a clutch RBI single to score Garciaparra. Devon White followed with a single, and Mueller drew a walk to load the bases for Morandini, but Tony Gwynn made a fine running catch of Mickey's foul in the right field bullpen to snuff out the Ely rally.

Both pitchers settled down for a couple of innings, then Devon White took Arrojo downtown with two down in the home 6th to give Ely a 4-2 lead.

Buck Miller II sent Mike Simms up to hit for Varitek to open the Livingston 7th. Schneekloth immediately called upon Juan Acevedo as soon as Simms was announced. Acevedo fanned Simms and Miller sent Kenny Lofton up to bat for Chris Stynes.

Lofton laced a double and Acevedo, pitching a little too carefully to Edgar Martinez, walked him to put the tying runs on base for Alou. He retired Alou on a deep fly to left and Schneekloth didn't like what he saw; so, he called on southpaw Scott Radinsky to face the lefthanded hitting Robin Ventura. Terry called it right — Radinsky got Ventura looking to end the threat as the Rednecks squandered yet another chance to get back in the game.

In the Livingston 8th, Tony Gwynn got a 1-out single for his second hit of the game. Mark Grace moved him to second on an infield out, and Schneekloth again went to the bullpen. This time he brought in super closer Trevor Hoffman to face Eric Young. Young fouled the strategy as he slashed a single to right. A hustling Tony Gwynn beat Van DerWahl's throw to third. That brought up Deivi Cruz who had replaced Stynes at shortstop after Lofton pinch hit for Stynes in the 7th. Cruz was no match for Hoffman. Trevor got him on a routine fly to right as the Rednecks stranded two more baserunners.

Ely got a runner to third in their half of the 8th, but Arrojo fanned Mueller to work out of the jam. In the Livingston 9th, Hoffman fanned David Nilsson for the

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first out; then Edgar Martinez ripped a single to give Alou another chance as the tying run. Moises almost got the job done. He tripled Martinez home with a gapper to right center. That made the score 4-3 with one-out and the tying run at third base for Robin Ventura. Schneekloth brought the infield in to cut off the tying run, Alou faked a break for the plate — and Ventura whiffed. Roberto Kelly, who had homered off Moyer in the 4th, was the last hope for Livingston. Kelly checked his swing on a 3-2 pitch, but the first base umpire said he went around and called Kelly out on strikes to end the game.

Each team had 10 hits, but the Rednecks stranded 10 runners, 6 of whom were in scoring position. Moyer got credit for the win; Hoffman got the save ; and Arrojo took the tough-luck loss.

Game 4

If the fans thought game 3 was a nail-biter, it was only until they watched game 4 unfold. Jose Lima took the mound for Livingston against his former Houston teammate, Shane Reynolds.

The Rednecks broke the ice in the 2nd. Gwynn collected his fifth hit of the series, a single, to lead off. Reynolds got the slumping Ventura and the hot-hitting Eric Young, but David Nilsson launched an opposite field homer just inside the foul pole for a 2-0 Livingston lead.

Lima coasted through the first two innings. He surrendered a lead-off single to Bill Mueller in the 3rd, and then retired the next two Ely batters with no trouble. But Jose's nemesis — the gopher ball — caught up with him when Carlos Delgado rocketed his second homer of the series to tie the game at 2-2.

In the Ely 4th, Mike Piazza coaxed a lead-off walk. Piazza must have Ernie Harwell's comment in the broadcast booth. Ernie said of Piazza, "He might score on a triple." Well, Piazza took off for second with Strawberry at the plate and he beat Nilsson's throw for a steal. The Strawman then rapped a single to center. Piazza stopped at third, further confusing the Redneck defense. Then VanDerWahl hit a "frozen rope" to Lofton in center and Piazza broke for the plate and Strawberry broke for second. Lofton elected to throw

the second and nailed Strawberry, but Piazza scored untouched for a 3-2 Ely lead.

The score remained 3-2 until the Rednecks erupted for 3 runs in their 6th inning at bat. Moises Alou walked to open the inning and Captain Hook Schneekloth yanked Reynolds in favor of lefty Chris Peters to face Mark Grace. Graced foiled the strategy by bleeding a single through the right side, moving Alou to second.

Tony Gwynn was up next. Piazza let the first pitch get away from him for a passed ball, moving Alou to third and Grace to second. Then Gwynn plated both runners with a seein'-eye-single through the hole between second and first. The runs put Livingston ahead 4-3. Schneekloth left Peters in to face the slumping lefty Robin Ventura, but Ventura worked him for a walk to put runners at first and second for the second time in the inning.

That was enough for Schneekloth. Peters departed for the showers and Mark Leiter was called in to duel against Eric Young. Leiter got Young on a foul pop, but walked Nilsson to juice the sacks. Deivi Cruz made the score 5-3 with a sacrifice fly to left as Tony Gwynn outraced Darryl Hamilton's throw to the plate. Leiter then walked Kenny Lofton to re-load the bases for Edgar Martinez. Schneekloth visited with Leiter, but left him in to face Edgar. Somehow, some way, Leiter got Martinez to pop out in foul territory, stranding the three runners.

Showing the resiliency of a good team, the Tzzz struck back in their half of the 6th. Delgado got another hit, this one a single, and stole second with no outs. Garciparra moved him to third on a bounce out and Piazza closed the gap to 5-4 when he scooted a single past Young at second base. Strawberry fanned, but Piazza caught Lima and Nilsson asleep and stole second base AGAIN!!! An obviously shaken Lima walked VanDerWahl on four pitches and then walked off the mound and to the showers as Buck Miller II brought in Ricky Bones to face Devon White.

White cleared the bases with a triple down into the right field corner and the Tzzz went ahead 6-5. Bones stranded White at third by retiring Mueller on a fly out

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to left center, but the damage was done.

Both managers engaged in strategic moves the rest of the way. Before the fat lady sang, Schneckloth brought in Ricardo Rincon, Juan Acevedo, and Trevor Hoffman in addition to Reynolds and Leiter. Buck Miller II called on Turk Wendell and Doug Brocail to put out more Ely fires.

The Rednecks had their chances. In the 7th, 8th, and 9th, they put at least the tying run on. In the 9th, with two outs, Edgar Martinez singled, giving Alou another chance to be a hero. That finished off Acevedo and Schneckloth called on Hoffman for the save. Harwell's call of Alou's at bat says it perfectly: "He cranks and fires ... this one is hit ... it may carry ... it's way back ... NIXON makes the catch at the track ... and that's out number three and the game."

Mark Leiter was credited with the win in relief and Hoffman earned his second save. Jose Lima wound up being charged with all six Ely runs and took the loss. Ricky Bones got the blown save.

The victory evened the series at two games apiece.

Game 5

Game 5 was a re-match of the game 1 starters. Curt Schilling for Livingston against Pedro Martinez of Ely. Schilling had bested Martinez in the series opener 9-4. This time it was Pedro's turn.

It looked early on as though the Rednecks were going to rough up Pedro again. They had pounded him for 8 runs and 9 hits in his six inning stint at Denham Springs. Edgar Martinez and Moises Alou posted back-to-back singles in the 1st after Lofton had grounded out to open the game. Mark Grace drove in Martinez and sent Alou to third with a single, but Pedro got Tony Gwynn to rap into an inning-ending double play as the visitors went up 1-0.

Martinez struggled in the 2nd and 3rd but avoided any more damage. Schilling breezed through his first two innings on the mound.

In the bottom of the 3rd, Schilling lost his control and walked the first two batters. Then Mickey Morandini, who had touched him for a 2-run homer in

game one, did it again. This time Morandini hammered a "no doubter" to right field for a 3-2 Ely lead.

The Rednecks wasted another opportunity in the 4th when Tony Gwynn, who had doubled, ran through a red light at third base and was nipped at the plate by Devon White's throw following a single by Eric Young.

In the Ely 4th, Mike Piazza was up to his tricks again. He drew a lead-off walk and stole second before Strawberry struck out. Still struggling with his location, Schilling walked Devon White, which brought up Bill Mueller with runners on first and second. Mueller jumped on a belt-high heater and deposited it in the right field bleachers to run the score to Ely 6-1. The homer also ran Schilling, as Buck Miller II brought in Ricky Bones. It was Schilling's shortest outing of the season.

Bones silenced the Tzzz bats for 2 2/3 innings, and Jim Bruske gave up an RBI single to Eric Davis in the 7th. It was Davis' third hit of the game. Eric wound up with half of Ely's six hits. Tim Crabtree blanked the Tzzz in the 8th for Livingston.

Pedro sailed along until the 9th, when he ran out of gas. Eric Young got a wind-blown single to open the Redneck 9th. Nilsson flied out and Pedro plunked Chris Stynes, moving Young to second. Kenny Lofton then tagged a high fastball for a 3-run homer over Eric Davis' outstretched glove. Pedro recovered briefly to fan Edgar Martinez for his 12th strikeout, but Moises Alou followed with a single for the 11th Redneck hit.

That hit brought Schneckloth out of the dugout and knocked Pedro out of the game. Once again, Trevor Hoffman trudged in to put out the fire. With Alou on first and the score 7-4 Ely, Hoffman whiffed Mark Grace for the final out to earn his third save in as many games.

Ely was out-hit 11 to 6, but once again the Rednecks wasted opportunities. They stranded 11; the Tzzz scored 7 runs on their 6 hits and stranded only 3 runners. Martinez evened his record at 1-1 and Schilling fell to 1-1 for the series.

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Ely is now one victory away from the Clemente League championship, having turned the tables on the boys from Louisiana. After a travel day, the series will resume in Denham Springs. Lefty Brian Bohanon will try to clinch for Ely. Manager Wool has announced that Bret Saberhagen, an 18-game winner during the regular season, will make his first appearance of the LCS as the Livingston starter. Should there be a seventh game, Ely will send out Redneck nemesis Jamie Moyer against Boomer Wells.

LCS Notes

After five games ... Rednecks .262 BA. Ely .213.

Homers: Ely 7, Livingston 5. Stolen Bases: Ely 11-3, Livingston 2-1. ERA: Livingston 4.50, Ely 5.23. Batting Average: Edgar Martinez .421, 8 hits; Eric Young .417, 5 hits; Tony Gwynn .389, 7 hits; Moises Alou .350, 7 hits; Devon White .313, 5 hits.

Runs: Grace and Delgado - 5. RBI: Morandini and Alou - 5. HR: Morandini and Delgado - 2, eight players with 1 HR each. Edgar Martinez is the only player who has hit in all five games and leads with five walks.

Box scores were not available a press time.

