

POPE JV BEATS LASSITER IN OPENER HOUNDS SCORE SIX RUNS IN THE TENTH INNING TO WIN 11-5

2/13/2024

Opening day for the young Greyhounds can best be described as 20 stomachs full of butterflies that were having butterflies. The first game of the season saw the Greyhounds take on their next door academic neighbor, the Lassiter Trojans. This game was the first of the back-to-back matches with the Trojans.

Pope clad in their dark navy jerseys trimmed in Carolina Blue with Carolina Blue numbers and grey pants led off the game with a strong first inning with a couple of walks by **Aaron Best** and **Parker Troughton**. After advancing on the base paths on a ground out, Best and Troughton scored on **Maddox Corya's** single up the middle on a hard-hit ball that hopped funny off the mound out of the reach of the infielders. With no more hitting action in the inning, the Greyhounds jumped out to a 2-0 first inning lead.

All eyes were on the sophomore right hander **Davis Smith** as he took the mound in his season debut. Two batters into the game and two strike outs under his belt, a harmless hit was voided on an inning ending out to first.

The bottom of the 3rd saw the Greyhounds trot out Freshman righty **Ellis Couch** for his first appearance of the season. The Trojans hit long back-to-back doubles to start the inning and jumped to a 3-2 lead. Couch caught his breath in the inning, gave up a couple of walks, and ended the inning only down 4-2.

Couch turned in a 1-2-3 inning in the bottom of the 4th. The last out was a ball that took a long ride to **Ryan Healy** in deep left field.

The Greyhounds had a short fifth inning followed by an equally short half of the 5th for the Trojans. The 6th inning saw pitching changes by both teams.

In the top of the sixth with one out, **Parker Troughton** singled on a line drive to center followed by a hard-hit single to left by **Thomas Williams** and a ground ball up the middle by **Maddox Corya**. With the bases loaded, **Hall Mitchell** grounded out but got an RBI on the play as Troughton scored. The inning ended with the Greyhounds now trailing only by one run.

Davis Johnson entered in relief of **Ellis Couch**. The lanky freshman made quick work of the Trojan line up with the help of his defense and by recording his first career strikeout. The bottom of the 6th reflected a 4-3 lead by the Trojans.

In what may have been one of the best clutch hits of the evening (pun intended), **Aaron Best** singled home **Everett Espe** and **Jack Healy** in the top of the 7th to move the score to a 5-4 lead for the Greyhounds.

The Pope coaches handed **Parker Troughton** the game ball at this point. Spoiler alert, it took the freshman three more innings than planned, the right hander pitched into some jams and pitched

out of them including icing the win with a strikeout- strikeout -ground out bottom of the 10th to close out the game. It appeared as the hotter the Pope bats got; the more accurate Troughton's arm became.

Ultimately, it was Troughton's line drive single to center on an 0-2 pitch that broke the 5-5 tie when **Greg Gastley** scored on the hit from 3rd after reaching base on double to left field to start the inning. The Greyhounds lit up the scoreboard for six runs with a sundry of walks and hits including a monster double by **Hall Mitchell** and an equally towering triple by **JC Slavis**.

A wonderful experience and character-building game for the young Greyhounds and a great start to the season. The same two teams meet at Pope's home field tomorrow, Wednesday February 14th. We would all LOVE IT for a 2-0 start to the season.