

March 6: Mansfield Defeats AHS 9-3

Mansfield used timely hitting and excellent defense to beat the Colts 9-3. After giving up two wind-aided doubles leading to two early runs to start the game, Lawrence Brandt kept the potent Mansfield line-up at bay retiring 10 of the next 14 batters: two of the hitters reached on errors, one got a single into short right, and one double, but that runner tried to stretch it into a triple and was gunned down 8-6-5 (Rice-Dancer-Johnson). Meanwhile, the Colts had several chances, but only managed to cut the lead to 2-1, due to two defensive gems by Mansfield. In the second inning second-baseman Duane Hughes singled to open the inning, but was erased by a nicely turned 6-4-3 on Lawrence's chopper up the middle. DH Nathan Rowe followed with a single and scored when Gavin Hawbaker, who started the game in left-field, ripped a double into the left-field corner. The play of the game was then turned in by the Mansfield center-fielder who turned a sure game-tying gapper scalded by catcher Chris Burnett into a long out, by getting a tremendous jump and making an over-the-shoulder catch while running at full speed. In the third the Colts got two on with a two-out walk by Tyler and human pin cushion Clayton Johnson's 3rd hit-by-pitch of the season (Clayton also singled in the 5th to take over the team lead in batting average at .462, and raising his on-base percentage to a spiffy .588, narrowly behind Kelsie's .591), but couldn't get the equalizer. With the Colts trailing 4-1 in the 4th, Jordan Miller mashed a ground-rule double to left-center and followed that in the 6th with his 2nd hit of the game slapping an outside pitch into right field, but neither hit figured in the Colts scoring. The Colts got nine hits in all, by eight different players, but by the time Austin McKinney singled, stole his team-leading 11th base and scored his 10th run of the season—on Tyler Rice's RBI single (his 10th RBI) in a two-run 5th inning rally, the game was already out-of-hand, due to a four-run rally by Mansfield in the top of the frame. Mansfield extended the lead to 9-3 in the 6th, and Jake Landrith pitched a scoreless top of the 7th, before time ran out on the Colts. In the notable fielding department, Jeremy Cook had nine put-outs at first base without an error.