

March 9: Lamar Rallies in the Rain, Defeats AHS 11-6 in District Opener

The Lamar-AHS game started in a drizzle at AHS, with the Colts falling behind when a dropped pop-up put them in a 1-0 hole, continuing an alarming early season trend. The Colts then changed the script and grabbed their first first-inning lead of the season: Right-fielder Austin McKinney tripled, scoring on shortstop Kelsie Dancer's double. Center-fielder Tyler Rice singled, and the four-run rally was capped by DH Nathan Rowe's two-out single plating second-baseman Duane Hughes, who had reached on a fielder's choice, on a grounder that erased pitcher Lawrence Brandt at second. After a brief rain delay brought out the Colts grounds crew (who looked suspiciously like Colts players), Lawrence bounced back from being erased and had an easy second inning on the bump, as Kelsie and Omar Frias, who made his season debut at first base, turned a couple of routine grounders into easy outs.

The Colts had a chance to break the game open in the second, taking a 5-1 lead when catcher Chris Burnett walked, advanced on Austin's second hit, and scored on Kelsie's single (Kelsie's 3 for 4 day raised his average to .435, tops among Colts starters). Tyler's sacrifice bunt moved the runners into scoring position, but a strikeout and a nice running catch by the Lamar right-fielder thwarted the strategy. This proved to be a turning point in the game, as Lamar struck back in the third. The Vikings loaded the bases without a hit, (HBP, BB, BB), followed by a bases-clearing double just beyond the reach of left-fielder Jordan Miller. After a game-tying single, reliever Jeremy Cook entered the game retiring Lamar's 7, 8, 9 hitters in order. The Colts looked to grab the lead back, as a lead-off single by Duane, and an error by the shortstop, put two on with none out, but Duane was tagged out at the plate on Omar's chopper to third, and the Colts couldn't score. The Vikings brought the lumber in the fourth to take control of the game, the first 9 Purple People Eaters reached base (6 hits and 3 errors) off Jeremy and Kelsie. By the time the dust would have settled (if it hadn't been raining), it was 11-5, the only bright spot being a Viking thrown out at home on a strong throw from Austin in right to catcher Chris, who dived across the plate to apply the tag.

The Colts gamely tried to rally off Lamar's flame-throwing reliever, who struck out the first two Colts, but allowed the next three to reach (third-baseman Clayton Johnson walked, Lawrence got grazed, and Duane walked), before an inning ending strikeout. The Colts still trailing by six had last at-bats in the bottom of the inning after Kelsie retired the heart of the powerful Lamar line-up in order. Again the Colts had three base-runners reach after two were out, but after aggressive base-running by Austin cut the deficit to 5, a called third strike doused the rally and dampened the spirits of the soggy home crowd, with the final score being Lamar 11 Colts 6.