

Tigers walk off Westfield on Makarewicz's homer

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With a base open and one out in the bottom of the ninth inning, Westfield elected to pitch to Avary Makarewicz.

The Ripon High School senior made the Pioneers pay for that decision.

Avary Makarewicz delivered with a walk-off, two-run home run to give the Ripon Tiger softball team a 9-7 extra-inning home victory over Westfield last week Friday. The home run was her team-leading seventh of the season.

FOR MORE ON THIS

✓ For a story on Ripon's regional semifinal game against Plymouth, visit www.RiponPress.com.

With the win, Ripon finishes the regular season 14-9 overall. It marks its best record since going 18-5 in 2013, which was the year after it came one game away from qualifying for its first state tournament appearance.

"I thought for sure that they were going to put Avary on," Ripon head coach Mike Makarewicz said. "I would put Avary on base 100 times out of 100 in that situation; I mean you have to."

While Avary Makarewicz delivered in that situation, Mike Makarewicz noted that sometimes Avary gets in her head about her swing and that he and her came to the ballpark earlier last week Friday to work out a few kinks.

"Avary has a prettier swing than most, even when it's not going right," Mike Makarewicz said. "For her confidence, she needed that [clutch home run]. She's capable of doing that anytime. She just needs to realize that."

Early in the game, it didn't appear like any heroics would be needed from Avary Makarewicz as Ripon jumped out to a 7-0 lead four innings in. Abby Radloff drove in four of those seven runs on a pair of hits, which included a two-run home run in the third inning to



RIPON HEAD coach Mike Makarewicz congratulates Abby Radloff after she hit a two-run home run against Westfield. *Jonathan Bailey photo*



EVA BAKER SWINGS at a pitch in Ripon's 9-7, extra-inning win over Westfield last week Friday. She finished 2 for 3 with two doubles. *Jonathan Bailey photo*



AVARY MAKAREWICZ IS greeted by teammates as she leaps on home plate after hitting a walk-off, two-run home run in the bottom of the ninth inning to give Ripon a 9-7 win over Westfield last week Friday. *Jonathan Bailey photo*

make it 5-0. Also driving in runs for Ripon were Alli Bumby and Eva Baker.

The 7-0 lead, however, was quickly erased in the top of the fifth inning when Westfield scored seven times to tie the game. The big inning was aided by four Ripon errors, as well as a couple of hard-hit and well-positioned balls.

Ripon also had an opportunity to get out of the inning limiting the damage to just a couple of runs, but a close call that would have been the third out did not go in its favor.

"I never blame umps," Mike Makarewicz said. "The ump missed one, but that inning should have been over three at-bats before that.

Unfortunately, this year, we're too capable of having a four-error inning. But fortunately for us today, our bats [picked us up]."

After Westfield tied the game at 7-all in the top of the fifth inning behind the seven-run inning, neither team scored again until Avary Makarewicz's walk-off, two-run home run in the bottom of the ninth inning.

The Pioneers threatened to score in the top of the eighth inning, when Emily Kasuboski walked the leadoff hitter and then grimaced in pain. The senior was removed from the circle with a foot injury and replaced by junior Laila Simonis, who walked the first hitter she faced as well to put runners on first and second base with no outs.

Simonis settled in, however, to retire the next three batters to keep the score deadlocked. She then pitched a scoreless top of the ninth inning and led off the bottom of the ninth with a double to set up the dramatic victory.

"Laila warmed up before the game and it had been six, seven long innings before she threw," Mike Makarewicz said. "And when she came in, she was rusty. Every single pitch was high. ... But Laila dialed in. I call Laila 'old reliable.' Sometimes it takes a little bit to find it after a pause, but once she finds it [she's hard to score on]."

Offensively, Ripon continued to swing hot bats as it collected 18 hits. Avary Makarewicz, Baker and Simonis recorded three hits each, while Bumby, Kasuboski and Radloff added two hits apiece. Also getting in the hit column with one knock were Bryn Carlson, Kylee Busse and Erika Mills as all nine batters notched hits.

"The last three practices that we have had is by far the best this entire team has ever hit since I've been the coach," Mike Makarewicz said. "Our bats are



LAILA SIMONIS DELIVERS a pitch against Westfield. She entered the game in relief and tossed two scoreless innings, while also getting on base to begin the ninth. *Jonathan Bailey photo*

literally on fire at the best time of the season. And for our bats to be that on fire, we can make up for a bad inning. I just hope we don't have any more four-error innings."

Kasuboski started the game for Ripon in the circle as pitched seven-plus innings. She allowed seven runs, only three of which were earned on four hits and six walks.

Tigers cruise past Wildcats

Ripon made quick work out of the Wild Rose Wildcats last week Tuesday as it came away with a 16-4 non-conference home win in five innings.

Both teams scored a run in the first inning, before the Tigers erupted for eight runs in the bottom half of the second to take control. They then added five runs in the third and two in the fourth to put in effect the 10-run rule.

After scoring a run in the top of the first inning, Wild Rose added single runs in the third, fourth and fifth innings.

Ripon, which collected 16 hits, was led offensively by Eva Baker. The junior finished 3 for 3 with five RBIs.

Also finishing 3 for 3 were Alli

Bumby and Emily Kasuboski, with Bumby driving in two runs and scoring three times.

Adding single hits were McKenzie Parnell, Kylee Busse, Erika Mills, Laila Simonis, Abby Radloff and Avary Makarewicz, with the latter two tying Bumby for second on the team with two RBIs apiece. Kasuboski, Bryn Carlson, Busse, Mills and Simonis drove in one run apiece.

Kasuboski picked up the win in the circle for the Tigers. She allowed two runs, one earned, on three hits and a walk in three innings of work. Bumby, who hadn't pitched for a couple of years, relieved Kasuboski in the fourth inning and tossed the final two innings. The junior gave up two runs, both earned, on four hits.

Up next

The Tigers hosted the Plymouth Panthers Tuesday in a regional semifinal game that finished after press time.

Ripon was the No. 3 seed, while Plymouth is a No. 6 seed.

The winner of that game will face the winner of No. 2 seed Kettle Moraine Lutheran and No. 7 seed Waupun for the regional championship Thursday at 5 p.m.