

BASEBALL

Roaders win behind Pearre's arm, bat

■ Brunswick 9, Catoctin 4

By GREG SWATEK

gswatek@newspost.com

THURMONT — During his teacher-aide period Wednesday at Brunswick High School, senior Colin Pearre was told by longtime baseball coach Roger Dawson that he would be pitching later that afternoon at Catoctin.

It had been nine days since Pearre, one of the Roaders' top pitchers this season, was on the mound.

Dawson was trying to line him up for Saturday's scheduled game against Clear Spring that could have determined the top seed in the regional playoffs. But Dawson said Wednesday that game was unlikely to happen now since the Blazers had played too many games this week. The weather forecast also isn't good for Saturday.

"We needed him to throw. We needed to stretch him out, and we did that today," Dawson said. "He can't go for 10 to 12 days without pitching."

Well-rested but lacking his best stuff, Pearre was still more than good enough to lead Brunswick to a 9-4 victory over Catoctin.

He worked into the seventh inning and didn't surrender much more than the bloop single here and the occasional walk there to improve to 5-1 as a starter this season.

"I struggled a little bit, but the defense helped me and the bats were there," Pearre said. "You can't ask for much more than that."

Brunswick (14-4) finished with nine hits. Pearre had two of them batting second in the order, including a single to center that scored two as part of a three-run third inning for the Roaders. He later knocked in another run for Brunswick with a sacrifice fly to left in the seventh.

"His bat has been good," Dawson said. "He's playing well."

In previous seasons, Pearre was batting fifth for the Roaders, which meant he was always unsure if he would be

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coming up in the first inning.

Moving up to the No. 2 spot removed that uncertainty. But it created more pressure to get on base and set up teammates. He said it was daunting at first before settling into that spot nicely.

"It's definitely a big uptick getting that guaranteed at-bat in the first inning," he said. "I am able to get more at-bats, and I just feel more confident in that spot."

After the offense got off to a slow start this season, the Railroaders moved sophomore Carter Vinar, who bats left-handed, into the leadoff spot and bumped former leadoff man, junior Nate Borawski, toward the bottom of the order.

"It's like having two leadoff guys at the top and bottom of the lineup," Pearre said.

Ever since, there has been a noticeable increase in Brunswick's run production.

"At the beginning of the year, we were struggling to put up more than three, four, five runs a game," Pearre said. "I mean, this week, I think we have scored 12 or 13 runs.

I think the energy, just from the guys that aren't playing, is a huge contribution. We're having fun now. Everyone's relaxed. Everyone is getting into the game."

Brunswick could have done even more damage Wednesday. But the Railroaders left the bases loaded in the second, fifth and seventh innings.

Catoctin (5-11) really struggled with its pitching and defense. In addition to the nine hits allowed, the Cougars walked nine batters and hit six others. There were two balls dropped in the outfield.

"We've got to stay away from the walks, obviously. That's been a thing all year," Catoctin's first-year coach, Ken MacIvor, said.

"It's frustrating. I know we can be doing better than what we are doing. But we've tried to look at the season like high school is. It's basically 20 scrimmages to get ready for the playoffs since everybody gets in. We are trying guys at different spots, and trying to make sure, you know, can this guy do this? Can this guy do that? Trying to figure it out as we go here."