

East Rome Downs Ram Nine In State AA Baseball Tourney

The clock struck twelve on the "Cinderella" Rams as the East Rome Gladiators edged them 2-1 in the first game of the State AA Baseball Tournament.

The Rams entered the tournament as an underdog to the host Gladiators. With ace hurler Doug Bledsoe firing zeros, the Covington lads were in the thick of the battle all the way.

The Rams drew first blood in the bottom of the third inning when Terry Rutledge led off with a single and moved to second on a base - hit bunt by Ronnie Lynch.

Tim Christian moved the runners to second and third with a sacrifice bunt.

Terry Smith's grounder was mishandled by East Rome and Rutledge scored to give the Rams a 1-0 lead. At this point ace hurler Tommy Newman struck out the next two Rams to end the inning.

The lead was short - lived as in the top of the 4th East Rome scored two unearned runs to topple the Rams.

The key play of the game was a controversial double down the third base line by Larry Lemming which the umpire signaled was a foul ball, but after the dust had cleared the ball was ruled fair.

The tournament, one of the best handled in AA history, was played before large and enthusiastic crowds. The Chamber of Commerce, along with the City of Rome, did an excellent job in promoting the tournament.

East Rome went on to defeat Headland 6-0 for the AA crown, but Newton fans did have some consolation as Ronnie Lynch and Terry Rutledge were named to the AA All-State Team for the second consecutive year.

The future looks bright for a third straight trip to the state

tournament as only 3 out of 22 players will be lost due to graduation.

Among returnees will be ace pitchers Doug Bledsoe and Tony White who compiled 7-1 and 3-1 records respectively.

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