Meramec Earns Historic Comeback Win Over #2 Elgin

For the 0-5 STLCC-Meramec baseball team, history could not have come at a better time. In Friday’s (Mar. 6) home debut, the Magic slipped hopelessly behind the nation’s second ranked team, Elgin (Il) College, 15-3 in the seventh inning of a scheduled nine inning game.

That’s when the Magic bats started booming, rallying for nine runs in the bottom of the seventh, and seven more in the eighth to escape with a 19-16 win, and the greatest comeback in the 43 year history of Meramec baseball. The previous record came in 1977, when Meramec overcame a 10 run lead to beat Lincoln College.

“That’s one of the most amazing games I’ve ever been a part of as a coach,” said seventh year head coach Tony Dattoli. “As far as watching tenacity and the intestinal fortitude of these guys, they stick to it and never give up. It’s impressive and makes you very happy as a coach you got that kind of group with you.”

In the seventh, Meramec pushed across seven runs before Elgin could even record the first out of the inning, highlighted by freshman Taylor Holman’s (Fort Zumwalt West) first collegiate home run, a two run shot to the opposite field, right center.

“I just wanted to put a pretty good swing on it because I hadn’t been coming through in the clutch like I would like to,” said Holman. “It was a fastball right down the middle, it was on a tee. I sat back, got a pretty good swing on it, threw my hands in the air.”

Holman’s shot brought the Magic to within five, at 15-10, scoring himself and Nick Berding (Affton) who had singled. A Kason Koelsch (Cassville, MO) single and a walk to Justin Wilson (St. Charles West) brought up third baseman Jerry Roam (Francis Howell North), who singled in Koelsch to tighten the score to 15-11. Wilson would later score on a Brett Nelson (Owensville, MO) single to a 15-12 score after seven.

In the eighth, after Elgin had tacked on another run, it was Nelson again with the clutch hit, a two RBI double smoked over the center fielder’s head scoring Roam and Koelsch to knot the score at 16.

“There was one out at the time and bases loaded so I knew I had to get it in the air in the outfield somewhere, and at least get a sacrifice fly,” said Nelson, hitting in the third spot. “When I hit it, I felt pretty good and I knew it was over his head and I knew we tied the game. It was probably the biggest hit of my career.”

Clean up batter Nick Berding would deliver again a batter later with the game winning hit, a single to center to score catcher Monty Cooper (Sullivan) for the go-ahead run at 17-16. “Just put the ball in play, “was Berding’s mindset at the plate. “There was one out when I came up so I was just trying to hit a sacrifice fly, base hit, anything to get the guy in.”
Mike Gumm (St. Charles) added the insurance with a two RBI single to plate Berding and Nelson for the final runs. Kevin Mahler (Mehlville) pitched a scoreless ninth inning for the save. Benny Carmona (Austin, TX) earned the win in relief.

“It’s huge, we’ve been searching for a good win,” said Holman. “We’ve been fighting but we’ve just been coming up short, a lot of close games, so it’s good to get the first win especially the way we did.”