

Game Report: Sept. 21, 2022 – Farmers vs. State Farm

After having witnessed several blowouts at the Field of Dreams during the past week or so, Farmers and State Farm were two evenly matched teams, according to Vegas (Farmers were favored by only ½ run) and the fans came out to watch what was billed by ESPN as a must-see game. As I settled in to my seat beside a couple of old faithfuls – Peter Day and Richard Goodwin – HP umpire Mark Mills had given the “play ball” call and the first pitch was being delivered by RRSA President, Mick Calverley, to Farmers’ Steve Courtney.

Inning #1

Farmers had their voodoo working early, as they had 2 runs on the board after just three batters – and the ball hadn’t left the infield. Kelly Wissink (3/4) finally delivered a solid shot over second, knocking in run #3 and the Farmers were off to a great start.

Scott Wilson (3/4, 2B), who led off the bottom of the first for State Farm, was serving as the team’s coach in the absence of both Manager Coco and Asst. Manager Gary W. With this heavy responsibility riding on his shoulders, he used prayer and a challenging pep talk to prepare his team prior to the game. Then, raising his bat to the sky as he moved confidently to the plate, he was heard saying “Follow me, team, as we seek victory in battle today.” And I’ll be – Scott delivered a ringing double to center ... and those State Farmers didn’t stop hitting until they had scored the 5-run max for the inning. Carol Rumberger (2/4) and Mike Braam (4/4, 2-2B) contributed their solid hits, followed by triples by both Mike Moss (3/4, 3B) and Ken Kamrath (3/4, 2B, 3B), and capped off by a ringing line drive to center by Jeff Rumberger (3/4).

After 1 inning: State Farm - 5, Farmers – 3.

Innings #2 + 3

Seeing they were in for a real dogfight (after having been unable to log a single out in the first), Farmers’ coach (and pitcher) challenged his players to continue using voodoo or any other means to reach base. I tell you, these coaches get results when they speak. Immediately, here come the hits. Jackie Fox (2/4) led off the inning with a blast to left field, and Wheels (2/3), Danny Thomas (2/3), Gary Brown (2 RBI), Steve Courtney (4/4, 3B, HR) all followed by reaching first. Then Bill Smiley (3/4, 2B, 3B) sliced a triple to right to close out the scoring for the inning. And in the Farmers’ 3rd inning, they added 3 more runs, thanks to hits by Jay (3/4) and Kelly Wissink, Steve Tafoya, Coach Sean (3/3), and Jackie F. John Gauthier had what looked like a base hit ... until Scott W made a great running catch into the outfield from SS. Coach Sean provided the bases-clearing double that plated 3. Let’s not fail to point out that 3rd base coach Gary Brown should receive credit as well for his part in waving all the runners home (at least, according to Gary).

State Farm’s hit streak continued into their 2nd inning as Mighty Matt Curtis (3/3, 2B) and President Mick collected solid shots to left and right field, respectively, netting a run. Crazy Legs Commish Braam turned a basic single to center into a double as he went sliding into second in a ball of dust. But the inning ended when Bill Smiley made one of his patented great running catches in left center. The bats had cooled off for Scott’s State Farmers for a couple innings and

After 3 innings: Farmers - 11, State Farm – 6.

Innings #4 – 6

Farmers were only able to net two runs during the next three innings. In the 5th, John Gauthier (3/4, 2B) and the Wissink duo loaded the bases, then Steve Tafoya and Sean Curry hit long fly balls to center to serve as sacrifice flies to garner the two runs. And that was it, thanks in large part to the pitching by our President. Announcer Jim referred to one of Mick’s high-arching pitches as being so high it burned out during re-entry.

Coach Scott, now realizing that the impact of his pre-game pep talk had faded, pulled the team into a huddle in the dugout, and began delivering another stirring challenge – asking that they each look within themselves for that something extra, to “ask not what the team can do for you, but what you can do for your team.” And again, the team immediately responded ... with 3 runs in the 4th inning. Just a thought here, but don’t you think Coach Scott should consider looking into being some type of motivational or religious speaker? He seems to have that “it” factor. Ken Kamrath, Jeff Rumberger, Mighty Matt Curtis, Mike Hudson, Sue Kamrath (3/3), and George Keller (2/3) each delivered solid hits that landed in the outfield to account for the 3 runs.

After 6 innings: Farmers – 13, State Farm 10

Inning #7

Up to this point, the fans in the stands had gotten their money's worth. 3-run game going into the final buffet inning. Plenty of firepower at the plate, drama on the base paths, and flashing of leather in the field. Season ticket holders, such as George Wendt, Ken Ford, Deb and Jerry Hinson – were all on the edge of their seats to see how the game would end. Remember, Vegas had Farmers by ½ run, and they were looking good at this point.

Farmers, feeling uncomfortable with their 3-run lead, quickly tagged on **3 more runs** as the top of the order delivered in a big way. There was a bit of concern about how Kelly W would deliver, after being introduced by HOF Announcer Jim Reese as “a fighting banana slug”. But BOOM, another line drive into center. The Farmers left the bases loaded as they recorded their final out, but were feeling good about their 6-run lead.

Now Coach Scott was not finished doing his magic. SIX runs down. It was time for him to pull out his Ronald Reagan “Win one for the Gipper” speech, with one slight twist. Let's win one for Coco and Gary. Our team leaders, as much as they wanted to be there, had higher callings. Each man and woman had to give that last ounce of energy and effort to bring home the victory for those revered gentlemen. Sue Kamrath led the parade with a single to right, followed by virtually every batter in the line-up contributing to the scoreboard. Crazy Legs Commish Braam provided another display of speed and sliding capability as he stirred up the dust at 3rd base, narrowly escaping the 3rd baseman's tag. Mike was definitely safe. We know because of two certainties: (1) Umpire Clyde Z gave the emphatic safe call, and (2) upon asking Mike after the game if he was safe, he responded by saying “no doubt, got under the glove by at least 2 inches”. Case closed. By the time Jeff R knocked in the tying run with yet another one of his smooth-swinging line drives to right center, everyone was on their feet. And who steps to the plate than ... you guessed it ... MIGHTY MATT. And on the first pitch from Sean, MIGHTY MATT hit the ball way, way out to the center field, allowing Ken Kamrath to score the winning run for the walk-off victory. Confetti flying everywhere as the State Farm team, after dousing Coach Scott with a Gatorade bath, proceeded to carry him off the field on their strong, broad, warn-out shoulders. The fans got so much more than they had hoped for. And as for Vegas, well ... you can't win 'em all.

Final Score: State Farm 17, Farmers 16

PS. In case you were wondering, each hunter is allowed to kill FIVE deer per year – that's 2 buck and 3 doe – in Throckmorton County. This bit of trivia (trivia to some, but very useful info to fellow hunters) was provided by 1st base umpire Bob Collins, via super-fan Richard Goodwin. Bob knows Throckmorton (home) ... and he knows the rules of softball.

PPS. Thanks to Bob Potter for maintaining the scorebook (it comes in handy when writing these game reports) and scoreboard operator Jacquie Maurer.

Cheers,

Dale Hill