



ASHLEY L. CONTI | BDN

George Stevens Academy's Taylor Schildroth (right) safely steals second while Houlton's Ryan Dee takes the throw during the Class C North baseball final Tuesday at Mansfield Stadium in Bangor.

## GSA

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base and Billy Phillips made the toss to Graham for the out, Schildroth raced home to make it 4-0.

The Eagles kept the pressure on in the third. Keenan spanked a sharp single past the second baseman, but was erased on an Entwisle fielder's choice. Entwisle stole second, advanced on a groundout and scooted home on a passed ball.

Houlton began its comeback in the fourth

when Dee worked a lead-off walk and took third on Nick Botting's one-out double. One out later, Graham hit an opposite-field, two-run double to left. Connor Grant followed with a nifty bunt toward third that led to an errant throw to first and the third run.

The Eagles got two runs back in the fourth. Slayton stroked an RBI single and Jacob Keenan ripped a run-scoring hit to make it 7-3.

The Shiretowners made things even more interesting in the fifth with the help of two GSA errors.

Tom Prescott was hit by a pitch, then Botting singled and both advanced on an errant pickoff throw by the catcher.

Both runs scored on a throwing error. Schildroth relieved Slayton to record the final out and preserve a 7-6 lead for the Eagles.

GSA left the bases loaded in the fifth, before Houlton tallied twice in the sixth to take the lead. Grant walked, Morgan Phillips singled and Nick Perfitt walked.

A throwing error allowed the tying and go-ahead runs to score.

## Softball

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McLaughlin was in trouble in every inning but the fifth and continually made clutch pitches to work her way out of jams.

However, after escaping bases-loaded jams in the first two innings, Bucksport junior second baseman Emily Hunt came through with a bases-loaded single with two outs in the third inning which wound up delivering two runs as the left fielder booted the ball to allow a second run to score.

Senior Julia Zavalza launched a solo homer in the sixth inning to give the Bucks a valuable insurance run after the Lynx had scored their run in the top of the sixth on Kim Voisine's bloop single into right and Cheyanne Libby's long two-out double over left fielder Madysen Robichaud's head.

"Everything was working today," said Saunders, who is now 12-0. "I just had to attack them right from the start. I felt awesome."

Saunders featured a live

fastball, a changeup and a curve.

"Her pitches broke pretty hard and we couldn't get ahold of them. She deserved what she got," said MA senior center fielder Camryn Lyons.

"She threw a lot of rise balls. She threw very well. She threw hard and she knew our weakness was the high pitches," said McLaughlin.

"It's not really a rise ball but it breaks that way," said Bucksport catcher MaKenzie Smith.

McLaughlin got the first two outs of the first four innings before loading the bases in each inning.

She nearly retired the side in order in the third but Kaylee Grindle barely legged out a slow roller to third for an infield single. Smith and Madysen Robichaud walked and, after falling behind in the count 0-2, Hunt lined her opposite-field single into left.

"She was pitching me on the outside corner so I scooted up on the plate [so I could reach it]," said Hunt.

"It was a good pitch. It was a strike but she stepped to the ball and hit

it well," said McLaughlin.

"I always like having a number one hitter in the ninth spot," said Bucksport coach Mike Carrier. "Emily is a great contact hitter. She can bunt and drag bunt and she's quick. They have a hard job getting her out."

Zavalza's homer in the sixth was her second of the year and cleared the fence in left center field. She hit a changeup.

"I was just looking to get a hit. I didn't think it would carry like it did," said Zavalza.

McLaughlin scattered eight hits with five strikeouts and five walks. She also hit a batter.

She threw 123 pitches of which 77 were strikes.

"She's a very good pitcher. She's very talented," said Bucksport's Smith.

Zavalza had a single to go with her homer, Tyler Dupont doubled and singled and Hunt had two singles for the Bucks.

"We just couldn't get anything going offensively and when we did, they made the plays," said MA coach Dean Libbey. "[Saunders] pitched very well."

## Bangor

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reached base in all five of his plate appearances from the leadoff spot.

Bangor scored two unearned runs in the second, then got an RBI single from Payne and an opposite-field two-run single to right by Brookings to extend its lead to 5-0 in the third.

"Last game when we faced him I was pulling the ball a lot so they figured

out I was a pull hitter," said Brookings. "I waited on that outside pitch and took it to right field."

Brookings added a sacrifice fly during Bangor's three-run uprising in the bottom of the sixth, a rally that began with back-to-back singles by Kemble and Cowperthwaite and a misplayed sacrifice bunt by Farnham that brought a run home. Cowperthwaite then scored on a wild pitch before Brookings' fly ball to center plated Farnham with the game's final run.

Kemble, Cowperthwaite

and Payne each added two singles to Bangor's 10-hit offense.

"It's a team effort," said Brookings. "We all contribute and we've all been in this position before so we know what our roles are and we just need to get the job done."

A job well done resulted in Bangor's 11th consecutive postseason victory, but the Rams hope there's still one more win to come.

"It's special every time," said Stevenson, "but we're just looking forward to the next game."

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