**Cross Plains wins first Home Talent title since 1977**

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**DODGEVILLE**

With two outs in the bottom of the ninth inning, Cross Plains manager Stan Nonn called time out to have a little chat on the mound with his starting pitcher, Shamus Terry, Sunday afternoon.

With the Businessmen holding a seven-run lead, Nonn kept his instructions brief for the 10-year Home Talent League veteran.

“He said ‘You’ve got two more batters,’ and I said ‘I hope I only need one more.’ That was the plan,” said Terry, who admitted he wanted to finish what he started.

Terry promptly recorded his fifth and final strikeout of the game as Northern Division champion Cross Plains secured a 14-7 victory over Western Section champion Dodgeville in a winner-take-all Home Talent League championship game at Reilly Field in Centennial Park.

The Businessmen won their fourth championship overall and first since 1977. Cross Plains finished with 14 hits, including three home runs and four doubles, off four Dodgeville pitchers.

“The boys came to hit today. The weather wasn’t great but they came to hit which was all that was important,” Nonn said. “Shamus kept us in the game. But (Dodgeville) can still hit. They’re a good club.”

Cross Plains lost the first game on the road in the Final Four round-robin championship series, but finished the season with a three-game winning streak. That included back-to-back must-win games against Dodgeville, beginning with last Sunday’s 6-2 victory.

“We didn’t waste any time getting going today. I can’t say enough about every teammate and every fan from Cross Plains. It’s pretty cool,” said Terry, who allowed 14 hits and four walks en route to earning the complete-game victory. “It’s a joint effort. Nobody plays a bigger role than anybody else. It’s cool for the town of Cross Plains.”

The Businessmen struck early when Kyle Simon opened the game with a four-pitch walk, moved to second on a Todd Endres sacrifice and scored on Terry’s double down the left-field line. One out later, Kodey Simon delivered an RBI-single to score Terry for a 2-0 lead.

“It’s the best way to go out, when everybody’s swinging,” said Endres, who finished with three hits and two RBIs. “We were hitting it hard today. We were hitting it in gaps. There was all sorts of fun to be had, over the fence helps, too.”

Cross Plains (19-4) made it 6-0 in the second inning highlighted by Romie Ripp’s lead-off home run to left field and RBI doubles by Endres and Tyler Fuhrman.

“It felt pretty good,” said Ripp, who finished with three hits and was only a triple shy of hitting for the cycle. “I tagged one and I knew I had gotten a pretty good piece of it.

“It was a solo but going up three in the championship game is fun. I was seeing the ball all the way today.”

Dodgeville (15-8) pulled within 6-2 in the third inning when Karl Reynolds blasted a two-run home run to left field. But Cross Plains roared back with a five-run fourth inning highlighted by R.J. Sarbacker’s three-run home run.

“That was the biggest one of my life, for sure. It feels really good, too,” Sarbacker said. “We all felt really good in the (batter’s) box. We felt confident. We took good batting practice, so it really felt good today.”

Terry drew a lead-off walk in the sixth and one out later, Kodey Simon made it 13-+2 when he lined a two-run home run to right field.

“They were pitching me away all game and I just went with it,” said Simon, who has been commuting during the playoffs from Winona (Minn.) State, where he plays for the 2011 Division II national runner-up. “It is pretty short in right and I got enough of it to get it over.”

However, Dodgeville refused to fold.

Tony DeMuth and Bill Hellman had run-scoring singles in the sixth. Then after Terry singled in a run in the seventh for Cross Plains, Eric Rohowetz hit a two-run homer to pull the Knights within 14-6.

“We kept battling back,” Dodgeville manager Pat Reilly said. “We were still battling at the end. It’s awful hard to beat Shamus (Terry) when he’s got a lead. But we tried.”

Aaron Ayres kept Dodgeville’s hopes alive when he lined his fifth hit of the game to right field with two outs in the ninth to score Gary James and trim the Knights’ deficit to 14-7.

Mark Ludwig followed with a single, which forced Nonn to call time and offer Terry a few words of encouragement.

“Every guy here is a character and every guy here wants to win,” said Terry, who also drove in two runs and reached base four times. “There is nothing better than getting a team win like we did today.

“It wasn’t the prettiest performance from my side, from the pitching side, and it made it that much better to come out and hit like that. I’d rather win like this every single day if we could. I can’t say enough about all the teammates I have.”

That included shortstop Kodey Simon, who pitched complete game victories against Albion and Dodgeville during Final Four round-robin play, but suffered a strained muscle in his neck while lifting weights earlier in the week and was limited to relief work, if needed.

“I’m glad Shamus got to finish,” said Simon, who finished with three assists and three putouts and helped turn one of two double plays for Cross Plains in the game. “It was great watching him work and finishing out with a strikeout is always a plus. It was a great experience.”