

Reds win state semifinal in extra innings

By Fred Kester

PUEBLO – No one said getting to the state championship was supposed to be easy.

Eaton's baseball team needed extra innings to beat Faith Christian 6-5 in the Class 3A state semifinals at Runyon Field in Pueblo May 21 and advance to the state championship for the seventh year in a row. The Reds improved to 21-3 with the

victory while Faith Christian ended its season at 19-5.

The score was tied 5-5 after seven innings. After Eaton's Dusty Dominguez struck out and Garrett Walker was out on a fly ball to lead off the bottom of the eighth inning, the Reds staged a two-out rally. The Reds needed just three pitches to bring home the winning run. Shane Dyer hit the first pitch he saw from

Faith Christian pitcher Josh Marner into the gap in left center field for a double. Little-used Matt Rundle then pinch-ran for Dyer to give the Reds a bit more speed. Eagles coach Ralph Nance didn't want to give the Reds' Jordan Hungenberg, who had an RBI single earlier in the game, a chance to win the game so Hungenberg was given an intentional walk without a pitch being thrown to him.



Eaton's Matt Rundle (46) scores the game-winning run in the eighth inning of the Red's 6-5 victory over Faith Christian in the Class 3A state semifinals May 21. Assistant coach Mike Galloway (55) celebrates at right.

photo by Fred Kester

This brought Jordan Nation, who bats eighth in the Reds' lineup, to the plate. Nation lined the second pitch he saw from Marner into right field for a single and sent Rundle on a mad dash for home. Faith Christian right fielder Hondo Carbajal misplayed the ball and injured his ankle in the process, allowing Rundle to score easily and put the Reds into the state championship for the seventh year in row and 13th time overall.

"I saw the ball go into right field and thought to myself, 'How awesome to get a chance to win the game like this,'" Rundle said. "I just ran my heart out. I didn't see the fielder bobble it, I was just watching coach (Jim) Danley and he waved me home. I haven't played in many varsity games this year, so for me to score the winning run that puts us in the state championship... it's just awesome."

Nation was similarly awe-struck.

"Wow, the adrenaline was really rushing there," Nation said. "I was pretty confident we were going to win the game after Shane got that double. Then when they walked Jordan I wanted it even more. I did-

n't see the ball land on my hit but after I touched first I saw the guy misplay it. I just started screaming my head off for Matt to make it home. It was all a blur after that, I don't remember even seeing Matt cross the plate."

The Reds held the Eagles scoreless in the top of the eighth inning to set up the game-winning heroics, but the Reds barely escaped the Eagles' half of the inning unblemished. The Eagles had runners on second and third with two outs and cleanup hitter Hudson Beasley at bat. Kyle Chamberlin, who was at third base, tried to steal home and he jumped over Reds catcher Jared Carlson's mitt to avoid being tagged. Carlson dropped the ball, but Chamberlin never touched home plate. Carlson picked up the ball and tagged Chamberlin out to end the inning. Nance approached the umpire in protest, but the umpire informed him that not only did Chamberlin miss the plate, he could also have been called out for hurdling the tag attempt.

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