

## **Orioles Overcome Three-Run Deficit to Best Braves**

by Matt Tymann

July 5, 2008 HERNDON—Chase Burnette and Tyler Massey each homered, and the Youse's Maryland Orioles continued their dominance over the Herndon Braves with a 5-4 comeback victory at Braves' Field on Saturday night.

The league-leading Orioles (18-5) have now won all five meetings between the two teams this season, although this victory was by far the toughest of the five.

Herndon (8-14) jumped out to an early 1-0 lead on a Shane Davis home run in the third inning, and kept it until the top of the fifth. Burnette led off that inning with a single, and then was advanced on two groundouts by John Hicks and Jeff Rowland. A wild pitch by starter Jaeson Hudnall allowed Burnette to score, and the game was tied at one.

But the Braves would strike again in the bottom of the fifth, keyed once again by the bat of Davis. After Michael Cheatham drove in Alex Ferrera with an RBI single to give Herndon a 2-1 lead, Davis blasted his second home run of the day to extend the lead to three. As Hudnall had allowed just four hits in five innings of work, the Braves' largest crowd of the season sensed an upset in the making.

Unfortunately for Herndon fans, Burnette had other ideas. A Steven Bumbry RBI singled chased Hudnall from the game in the middle of the sixth, and Burnette immediately followed with a two-run shot off of reliever Dan Steers, tying the game at four and showing everyone in attendance why the Orioles have been the class of the Cal Ripken Senior League to this point in the year.

Still, the Braves did not go quietly. After two scoreless half-innings, Matt Simone led off the bottom of the seventh with a single, and Cheatham advanced him with a sacrifice bunt. That brought up Davis, whose hot bat prompted an intentional walk. Reliever Tyler Hibbs then walked Eric Woodrow, loading the bases with just one out. But Hibbs struck out both Drew Gehring and Mycal Jones, ending the inning and preserving the tie.

The top of the eighth saw Massey hit his solo shot off of Steers, and the Orioles had their first lead of the game. Hibbs threw a perfect eighth, and then a perfect ninth, and that was that.

While the loss was undoubtedly frustrating for Braves' players and fans, both alike can take some solace in Davis' breakout game. Davis, Herndon's switch-hitting right fielder, started the season with just one hit in his first twenty-seven at-bats, and still has twice as many strikeouts as hits on the year. But he has now hit safely in seven straight games, and is hitting .410 over that span. With his two-homer game on Saturday serving as an exclamation point, Davis is now officially on a hot streak.

Davis will get a chance to make it nine straight games with a hit today, as the Braves host a doubleheader versus the 8-8 College Park Bombers, with the first pitch of game one scheduled for 1:00 PM. Herndon's probable starters are Pat Devlin (0-0, 3.48 ERA) and Joe Devlin (0-4, 4.70).