

# Sports

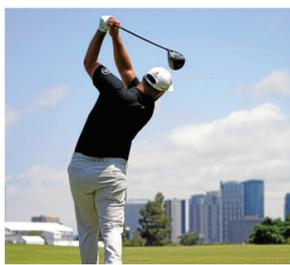
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CHIPPEWA.COM

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## CONFIRMED CONFIDENCE



BRANDON BERG, CHIPPEWA HERALD

McDonell head coach Jerry Smith, right, walks off the field with Carter Stelter, left, as Pecatonica celebrates after a 7-6 defeat in Tuesday's Division 4 state semifinals at Fox Cities Stadium in Grand Chute.

### McDonell baseball proves Smith's belief right in first — and only — season as head coach

GRAND CHUTE — Early on when first-year McDonell baseball coach Jerry Smith was just getting to know his team, he felt he had something special with its roster.



BRANDON BERG

It just took some time for others to see it. A 4-10 regular season gave way to a magical playoff run as the Macks rattled off five straight wins to advance to the Division 4 state tournament.

The road ended Tuesday night as McDonell's rally fell short to Pecatonica 7-6 at Fox Cities Stadium but the tough final result did little to dim Smith's outlook on the team and the season.

 **VIEW:** A collection of photos from Tuesday's McDonell baseball game by pointing your smartphone at this QR code and tapping the link. [NEWSVU](#)

"Maybe we weren't supposed to be here but we sure did embrace it. We want to thank everything that was supporting," Smith said after the game. "I got a lot of text messages and emails from other coaches. I got some support obviously from our fans and the school. Honestly we had a great time. It hurts.

"It hurts real bad but we faced a team that was 23-1 and we took them all the way to the bottom of the seventh inning and we lost 7-6. That's a pretty great ballgame."

Smith was a late addition to the Macks program as head coach. Already a kindergarten through fifth grade teacher in the McDonell Area Catholic Schools district, Smith had coached before joining the system and said he'd like to again if a chance opened up.

The head coach role for the baseball team was that chance.

Smith inherited a team with some experienced veteran players and talented youngsters.

"At the beginning of the year we obviously didn't know who he was but I think every single day at practice and at games we saw the coach he was," senior Aidan Misfeldt said of Smith. "We wouldn't be

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BRANDON BERG, CHIPPEWA HERALD

McDonell senior Eddie Mittermeyer is out at first base during Tuesday's Division 4 state semifinal matchup against Pecatonica at Fox Cities Stadium in Grand Chute.

### D 4 STATE SEMIFINALS | PECATONICA 7, MCDONELL 6

## Vikings hold off Macks in wild semifinal

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GRAND CHUTE — The clock finally struck midnight on the McDonell baseball team's Cinderella season.

But the Macks didn't go down without a fight, putting the tying run at second with two outs before top-seeded Pecatonica survived for a 7-6 victory in Thursday night's Division 4 state semifinal at Fox Cities Stadium.

Carter Stelter was hit by a pitch with two outs in the seventh inning to put the tying run on second base for the Macks (9-11). Stelter advanced to second on a wild pitch before Pecatonica relief pitcher got Keagan Galvez to ground out to second for the final out of a wild semifinal battle.

It was a tough end to an underdog post-

season run for McDonell in which the team entered the playoffs with four wins as a six seed in its sectional before rattling off five straight victories.

"It's a loss and it feels how you expect it to feel," senior Aidan Misfeldt said. "It hurts so much but I told everyone right when the final ball was tossed and the game was over I told people we shouldn't be here. Nobody expected us to be here. I mean we should be here but we have nothing to hang our heads about and we battled with this team.

"This is a great group of guys we got."

The Macks went back and forth with a Pecatonica squad ranked second in the final Wisconsin Baseball Coaches

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