

## Vikings' Season Ends With Game 3 Loss To Oilmen

By: Brandon Januska



Whiting, Ind. – August 9, 2023 – For the fifth time in the last six seasons, the Southland Vikings saw their season come to an end with a semifinal loss to the Northwest Indiana Oilmen after dropping Game 3 by a score of 10-2 on Wednesday at Oil City Stadium.

The Vikings struggled to string together hits against Oilmen starter Joey Turek, who allowed just one run over eight innings with five strikeouts and no walks.

Northwest Indiana scored first with a pair of runs in the third inning and never looked back, adding another pair in the fourth and one in the fifth before breaking the game open with a five run seventh inning.

Southland was in jeopardy of being shutout for the first time all season until they finally broke through in the eighth inning. Mike Gentile singled with one out and eventually came around to score on a two-out RBI single from Charlie Schau.

They added one more run in the ninth inning when Brandon West cracked an RBI double off of the right field wall to score Stephen Schwartz who was hit by a pitch to start the inning.

The Vikings finish their season with a 27-26 overall record, including playoffs, under the direction of first year manager Sullivan Stickann.

“Being able to make the playoffs in my first year was really cool,” Stickann said of his first season. “I definitely know how to win in this league now and how to recruit so I’ll only get better.”

The Vikings were one of three teams to finish the season with a winning record and were the only team in the league to never be shutout in a game.

They sent five players to the All-Star Game with pitcher Nolan Vlcek and catcher Matt Merk both being selected as starters and Jack Fitzharris, Will Moell and Jorgie Vazquez representing the team as reserves.

Nolan Vlcek was also named Northern League Pitcher of the Year and was a unanimous choice for the All-Northern League team.

With their 2023 season now officially over, the Southland Vikings will look forward to next summer when they return to action and try to capture their fourth Northern League Title.