

Strasburg rallies for win over Cards

By Tommy Keeler Jr.

FRONT ROYAL — A play at home plate capped off a furious rally for Strasburg on Friday night.

The Express scored the final four runs of the contest in a 5-4 dramatic victory over Front Royal in Game 1 of the Valley Baseball League North Division Finals at Bing Crosby Stadium.

The game ended on a double play. Strasburg led 5-4 in the bottom of the ninth with one out and Front Royal's Dalton Rogers on third as the potential game-tying run. Front Royal's Colby Dishmond hit a ball to center field, where it was caught by Donovan May. The throw by May to home plate was on line and in time as Strasburg catcher Brennon Kaleiwahea tagged out Rogers trying to score for the final out of the game.

"Donovan in center did a

good job getting behind it," Strasburg coach Stephanos Stroop said of the last play. "We tell our guys that when their making throws at home plate it's either got to be all the way or a long hop. We messed up twice earlier in the game, but that time it was all the way and kudos to [Kaleiwahea] for sticking with that throw."

"I think you got to send him right there — you do," Front Royal manager Brad Neffendorf said. "...That's not what this game comes down to. We left too many guys on base. We had opportunities to score and we didn't get a couple things done when we needed to."

Trailing 4-1 in the top of the eighth, the Express scored three runs to tie the game.

Daniel Midyett and Trevor Rucker drew back-to-back walks and Drew Johnson hit an RBI double to cut the lead to 4-2.

STRASBURG, B3

Strasburg

Continued from B1

With two outs, Jeremy Musser followed with a two-run double to tie the game at 4-4.

"Jeremy will be the first to admit he's not had the summer he wished he had, but all he did tonight was have two huge hits," Stroop said. "He's been working hard all summer

and he's starting to reap the benefits."

In the top of the ninth Drew Avans hit an RBI single to give the Express the lead.

"That was probably the hardest ball he's hit in his life," Stroop said of Avans hit. "We talk about getting better swings in plus-counts and at 2-0 that's the type of swing you want to have."

The Express now lead the series 1-0, and will host

Front Royal today in the second game in the best-of-3 series.

"This series isn't over," Neffendorf said. "We've responded all season long. We won two last time you know what let's force another [Game 3] and be back at our place on Sunday."

*Contact staff writer
Tommy Keeler at 540-465-5137, ext. 168, or tkeeler@nvdaily.com.*