

# BC3 freshman clears fence with 2 grand slams in the same inning

## Softball slugger declines to keep ball after rare feat

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Nikki Houk, a freshman left fielder for the BC3 softball team, is shown in New Castle on April 19, 2017.

(Saxonburg, PA) A Butler County Community College freshman clubbed two grand slams in the same inning of a game Monday, a rarity that had BC3 assistant softball coach Dan Beebe shaking Nikki Houk's hand as she rounded first base – and his own head.

Both of Houk's arcing grand slams, in Game 2 of a doubleheader against the Community College of Beaver County, cleared the 200-foot fence in left field at Laura Doerr Park in Saxonburg on a still afternoon, Beebe said. The first topped the fence by 5 feet, the second, by 15.

"Towering shots," he said.

Head coach Roni Mall, positioned in the third base coach's box, couldn't contain her smile when she saw Houk couldn't contain hers.

"To see something like that and see her jogging around bases, grinning ear to ear," Mall said.

The grand slams were the first for Houk, the leadoff batter and a 2016 graduate of New Castle Area High School. The left fielder leads the Pioneers with six home runs, Beebe said.

BC3 (15-3) swept the doubleheader against CCBC by scores of 17-0 and 19-8. The Pioneers on Saturday will defend their Western Pennsylvania Collegiate Conference title when they host the winner of Friday's game between CCBC and Garrett College, of Maryland. The championship game begins at 10 a.m. at Laura Doerr Park.

Beebe, in his first year as a BC3 assistant coach after leading the Moniteau High School girls softball team to a 109-20 record and a state title game appearance in 2016, said he has never seen the same player hit two grand slams in the same inning.

"Even as a baseball player," he said. "Never two grand slams in one inning. I was talking to the field umpire after the game, a man who was older than I am, and he said he has seen two grand slams in one inning, but not by the same player. That was a really unique thing Nikki did on Monday."

“I knew I was hitting pretty good”

Mall, who has coached softball for 12 years, the past three at BC3, also credits the Pioneers’ batters who packed the bases to set up Houk.

“This is an incredible team that is coming together,” Mall said, adding that Houk is “amazingly patient” at the plate.

In Game 1, Houk, a right-handed batter, hit a long single off the top of the fence in left field, Beebe said.

“After I hit the top of the fence in the first game, I knew I was hitting pretty good,” Houk said.

Houk said she “just wanted to get on base” when she stepped to the plate for the first time in the third inning of Game 2.

Said Beebe: “When she came up to bat with the bases loaded the first time, I was kind of thinking, ‘Is it going to go?’ And then it went.”

Once the ball shot off her bat, Houk said, “I knew it was going to go. My whole batting motion, it went perfectly. You get that feeling when the ball hits perfectly off the bat.”

“What are the chances ...? Sure enough, she did”

When Houk came to bat a second time in the third inning with the bases loaded, Beebe said he thought that CCBC could not pitch around her.

“They kind of had to go at her,” he said.

Then the thought crossed his mind.

“What are the chances she would hit another one?” he said. “Sure enough, she did.”

As her bat met the ball, Houk said she thought, “It’s gone. It went way farther than the first one.”

BC3’s players in the dugout, Beebe said, were all surprised.

“Even the other team,” he said, “was in shock.”

As was Houk.

“I never heard of anyone hitting two grand slams in the same inning,” she said.

And Beebe.

“That’s why I never say I have seen it all,” he said. “I haven’t.”

Despite Mall herself witnessing “an extremely rare” feat, she said Houk was largely unmoved – except for the grin as she rounded the bases.

Someone retrieved the ball from Houk’s second grand slam from behind the left field fence to present to her as a keepsake, Mall said.

“She is so humble,” Mall said. “She said, ‘That’s fine. Put it back in the game.’”