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**[Grand Island wins A-1 title in thriller](#)**

By Mike Meiler, scoreboard@niagara-gazette.com Niagara Gazette

Niagara Gazette — Grand Island coach Dean Santorio said his team would have to be a little better than Williamsville East in every facet of their Section VI Class A-1 championship game if they wanted to come out on top.

The third-seeded Vikings were just that, doing just enough to squeeze by the No. 4 Flames by a score of 14-13 in eight innings Tuesday night at Orchard Park.

John McGinty pushed a high pitch through the drawn-in infield, knocking home Jesse Ciffa with the bases loaded and no outs in the bottom of the eighth and ending a marathon of a game to send the Vikings to the Class A finals for the first time since 2009, when they lost in the Far West Regionals.

“It looked good to me,” McGinty said with a smile. “I thought I could get a piece of it so I took a swing.”

Williamsville East scored seven runs in the top of the first inning off Grand Island starter Dylan Kelly, but the Vikings responded with a six-run bottom half of the inning to stay in the game.

“That was really big for us,” Santorio said. “To go down that big early is tough. Dylan didn’t have his best stuff today, but you have to give a lot of credit to their hitters, they really smacked the ball. To come back with six right after that was huge.”

Grand Island took a 9-7 lead in the bottom of the second, only to have the Flames tie the game with two runs in the top of the third.

A.J. Jasek led off the bottom of the fourth with a double and scored on Drew Chorey’s RBI single, but the Flames answered again, scoring two in the top of the fifth to take an 11-10 lead.

The Vikings took a 13-11 lead in the bottom of the fifth on three consecutive RBI singles from Jasek, Connor Frascatore and Chorey, but again the Flames would come back, scoring twice in the top of the sixth.

Jasek, who relieved Kelly in the third inning, walked the first two batters he faced in the sixth and was replaced by McGinty, who threw seven innings of three-hit ball in the Vikings 2-1 semifinal win over Williamsville South on Friday.

McGinty gave up a bloop single to load the bases, and the Flames scored a run on a fielder's choice at second base. Will East star Thomas Styn hit another single to drive in the second run, and a walk loaded the bases for a second time.

The next batter grounded out to a sprawling Chorey at second base, who fired the ball home to catcher Ryan Hughes, getting a key force out. McGinty struck out the next batter to get out of the jam.

"I felt fine," McGinty said. "The adrenaline just took over."

The Vikings loaded the bases with no outs in the bottom of the seventh, but a fouled bunt with two strikes, a missed suicide squeeze and a strikeout sent the game into extra innings.

Styn led off the top of the eighth with a walk and ended up at third after Hughes' throw on his attempt to steal got by Chorey and into the outfield. A strikeout and a pop out left the speedster at third base with two outs.

As Hughes was tossing the ball back to McGinty after his second strike to the next Williamsville East batter, Styn broke for home. McGinty caught the ball and immediately tossed it back to Hughes, who tagged Styn just before he touched home plate for the final out of the inning.

"When I saw him take off, I had full trust the John would get the ball back to me," Hughes said. "(Styn)'s the fastest kid I've ever seen, but John made a nice throw and we got him."

Ciffa led off the bottom of the inning with a walk, and was followed by infielder Kevin Dobson. Jon Voyzey reached first on his sacrifice bunt attempt, loading the bases for McGinty, who drilled the 1-1 pitch through the six-man Williamsville East infield for the win.

"That's probably the craziest game I've ever been involved in," Santorio said. "It had everything and was exciting right up to the end."

Voyzey and McGinty each had four hits to lead the Grand Island offense. Chorey had three RBI, while McGinty, Kelly and Connor Frascatore had two each.

The Vikings will take on Class A-2 champion Albion in the Class A championship at 5 p.m. Thursday at Sal Maglie Stadium.