

Woodlan's

power surge

Shocks Leo

Warriors slug 4 home runs after entering game with 2 all season

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The Journal Gazette

WOODBURN — They were all waiting.

As soon as a home run landed on the other side of the fence, players rushed from the dugout, some giving full-throated yells in celebration, some high-pitched squeals, to gather around home plate and greet the hero of the moment.

It happened four times for Woodlan on Thursday.

WOODLAN **11**
LEO **4**

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or Grace Keller said, looking at Smead. Lauren Ehle led off the game for Woodlan with a home run. Burgundy Price had a solo shot to left-center to lead off the fourth. Madelymne Hostetler ripped her two-run shot in the fifth. Smead made it back-to-back with one to left.

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That show of power sparked the Warriors to an 11-4 victory over ACAC rival Leo and kept their hopes alive for a conference title.

"It's, like, overwhelming," sophomore Logan Smead said of the home-plate welcome. "This was my first one, just a good feeling."

The excitement is shared. "The look on their faces is priceless," se-

WOODLAN

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They all rounded the bases, smiling, and were engulfed by teammates as soon as they touched the plate. Helmets were slapped, backs were patted, high-fives were delivered.

And it felt good.

"Everybody's been pretty jacked up about this game all week," said Keller, who was 2 for 3 and had one of the team's eight extra-base hits. "All season we talk about the big ones, and this is one where everybody is ready to go. Everybody just builds off each other's success."

Woodlan (15-2, 4-1 ACAC) had only two home runs this season before Thursday. Coach Barry Ehle attrib-

ON THE WEB

To see a **photo gallery** from the game, go to www.journalgazette.net/galleries

uted some of the juice to the home plate umpire, who was keeping a tight strike zone.

"That just kind of shows what happens when girls are given a chance to swing the bat a little bit," he said. "Those girls are good. When they get good pitches, they're going to hit them hard."

Leo's Amy Schroer also had a home run.

The Lions (3-2 ACAC) scored two runs in the sixth to pull within 5-4, but Woodlan surged in the bottom of the inning to take over.

With the bases loaded and two outs, Keller laced the first

pitch she saw into right-center field, just out of the reach of Leo's center fielder, and all three runs scored on her double to push the lead to 8-4.

"When I'm on deck, I'm thinking, ... 'Calm down.' Say a little prayer and get up there and do what I've been practicing," Keller said. "This time I did (come through)."

Hostetler and Smead followed with home runs to take control of the game and keep the Warriors with a chance at the conference title. Heritage beat Adams Central on Thursday, leaving Woodlan and the Flying Jets with one loss each.

But Woodlan players didn't know that immediately after the victory.

And it didn't matter. "It feels awesome," Keller said of beating a rival. "I can't stop smiling."

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