



Friday, May 18, 2012

CIF-SS DIVISION 6 SOFTBALL PLAYOFFS

Big 6th inning lifts AAE past Marshall

By MATTHEW PETERS - STAFF WRITER

APPLE VALLEY • Gabi Bonato had been watching Marshall pitcher Cierra Newton all game long.

When Bonato, a junior at Academy for Academic Excellence, finally got her chance to face Newton, she mostly just kept on watching.

In her first at-bat of the game, Bonato walked to lead off the sixth inning and eventually scored the go-ahead run for the AAE softball team in a 6-1 victory over Marshall in the first round of the CIF-Southern Section Division 6 playoffs on Thursday.

The Knights (16-5) will face Santa Paula in the second round Tuesday.

Bonato's walk began a five-run outburst after Marshall (17-6) had tied the game at one in the top of the inning. AAE coach James Bentley said he wanted a lefthanded hitter to put down a drag bunt when he put Bonato in as a part of a defensive switch in the fifth.

Bonato didn't need to do much with the bat.

"I watched (Newton), and I knew she was kind of low," Bonato said. "If it's not there, it's not there. I'm not going to swing."

Bonato, who was a starter most of the season, said she didn't feel much pressure after entering the game so late.

"I kind of felt that what it will be, it will be," she said. "All I can do is play to the best of my ability and ... if luck is on my side, it's on my side."

AAE's first six batters in the sixth inning reached base. Nicole Carr was hit by a pitch and Haley Perea reached on an error. Then Bonato scored the winning run by coming home on a wild pitch.

From there, the Knights just kept adding insurance.

Whisper Bentley, who went 3-for-3 with a run scored, brought in two more runs when her infield single landed in the middle of a sudden sand storm created by the wind. Alyssa Frederick and Brianna Borst then hit back-to-back singles to bring in the final two runs.

Prior to that rally, neither team had much luck at the plate.

Marshall had just two baserunners in the first five innings, while AAE took a 1-0 lead in the first inning on a Cassie Williams' RBI single then was shut down for the next four innings.

In the circle, Williams kept the Eagles off balance throughout the day and finished with seven strikeouts and just three hits allowed.

Her only struggles came in the sixth inning, when she walked a pair of batters and gave up an RBI single to Marshall's Amy Zeronian that tied the game.

Marshall 000 001 0 — 1 3 1 AAE 100 005 X — 6 7 0

Newton and Bielski; Williams and Wi. Bentley. WP — Williams. LP — Newton.



DAVID PARDO, DAILY PRESS

WOUND UP: AAE starter Cassie Williams pitches during the Knights' playoff win Thursday.