



Eagles' win earns a share of AL title

By MATTHEW PETERS ~ STAFF WRITER

VICTORVILLE • Excelsior baseball coach Dan Booze went around to each of his players and shook their hands during the team's postgame huddle.

Booze was justifiably proud. The Eagles had just captured a share of their first-ever Agape League title.

Excelsior beat **Academy for Academic Excellence** 16-6 on Friday afternoon at Mojave Vista Park. The teams will share the league title, but Excelsior (12-4, 7-1 AL) enters the playoffs as the AL's No. 1 seed. Playoff seeds will be announced Monday at cifss.org.

"It feels good," Booze said. "We are going to have our first banner up in our gym for baseball. We've been talking about this all year to win a championship."

AAE had won the outright title the last three years and looked like it might be on its way to another. The Knights beat Excelsior 7-6 in the teams' first matchup of the season and took an early lead Friday.

AAE (11-5, 7-1 AL) jumped ahead 2-0 in the first and Excelsior didn't respond until the bottom of the third. But boy did they respond. The Eagles piled up 16 runs on 14 hits during the next three innings.

The Eagles scored six as they jump-started their offense in the third. Jordan Griffith tied the game up with an RBI single and Tylor Roth gave Excelsior the lead with a two-run double.

After flying out into deep center field during his first at bat, Jordan Sanchez connected with a home run to about the same location.

"I was swinging way too fast," said Sanchez of his first at bat. "The second (at bat), I missed it and I got a strike then I was just waiting on my pitch."

The Eagles took a 6-2 lead out of the inning.

AAE's Mark Edwards helped get the Knights back into the game with a home run blast to center to make it 6-3. With two outs, AAE rallied and scored three more runs to tie the game 6-6. But that was the last bit of offense the Knights got.

The Eagles responded as they started to run away with the game. They scored 10 more runs before the game ended in the fifth due to the mercy rule.

"I think we just wanted it more than them," Sanchez said. "We've been talking about this game since the (last game). We always lose against them."

Excelsior's Jadan Garcia was 3-for-4 with a double, triple, three runs scored and three RBIs. Jordan Griffith was 2-for-3. Eight of Excelsior's nine starters scored a run and seven had at least a hit.

Marquis Camargo pitched a complete game with three strikeouts.

AAE was short two key players Friday. Pitcher Nick Natali, who would have started, had a back injury and won't be able to pitch in the postseason. Starting shortstop Trevor DeLaHoussaye, who also pitches, also missed the game.

"We had a number of players starting their first games and playing at positions they weren't accustomed to," AAE coach Lars Hanson said. "We weren't able to put our best nine on the field and anytime you aren't able to put your best nine out there it's going to have an impact on the game.

"We just weren't able to hold them today. We basically ran out of pitching and honestly we lost some of our composure, which is a trait we've never displayed all year long."

AAE's Jed Phillips finished the 2-for-3 with a run scored, Edwards went 2-for-3, Braxton Ready was 2-for-3 with a run scored and Chandler Hanson and Cohlton Hubbard were both 2-for-2.

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Hubbard, Bell (4), Phillips (7) and Ready; Camargo and Griffith. WP — Camargo. LP — Hubbard. 2B — Hanson (A); Garcia (E), 3B — Garcia (E). HR — Edwards (A); Sanchez (E).

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JAMES QUIGG, DAILY PRESS

Excelsior's Jordan Griffith scores after colliding with Academy of Academic Excellence catcher Braxton Ready Friday during their Agape League game in Victorville.



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Excelsior's Jared Speck slides safely under the tag of AAE third base Christian Valencia on Friday.