



Sunday, August 05, 2007

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Comets Fall To SD Renegades in Eight Inning Thriller

8/3/2007 9:54:24 AM

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The Capital City Comets held a 4-2 lead entering the bottom half of the seventh when the San Diego Renegades scored two runs to tie the game, then scored the winning run in the eighth with two outs, securing the 5-4 winner's bracket victory Thursday night at the Sacramento Softball Complex.

For most of the night it was pitcher's duel between the Comets' Shelby Gill, and Renegades lefthander Delaney Gourley. Both pitchers, who often smiled and looked relaxed, had command of the game. The taller, harder throwing Gill looked to the fastball for success allowing just one run and one hit through the first four innings. On the other side it was the smaller Gourley who was equally as impressive with her mix of change ups and outside pitches often leaving Comets batters confused thus limiting their offense to only one run over that same four inning span.

Down 2-1 entering the fifth, the Comets produced a two out, two run rally that came on three base hits giving the Comets their fist lead of the game at 3-2. The rally started when Carly Evans singled, made her way to second and to third, and ultimately scored on a passed ball to tie the game at two runs a piece. Gill followed Evans with a single of her own and then two batters later Marissa Andrade singled home Christina Havens for the go ahead run.

The Comets picked up another run in the sixth giving them a two run lead. However, despite the small margin, the Comets appeared confident and in command of the game as the team entered the bottom of the seventh just three outs away from victory. Then the dramatics began.

Renegades leadoff batter, Hailey Hirata, started the bottom half of the seventh with a base hit that got by the center fielder putting Hirata at second base. Next up was the left handed hitting Gourley who had the rip of the night when Gourley crushed a ball over the lefffielder's mitt scoring Hirata and giving Gourley the standup double that would cut the Comets lead to 4-3.

Five batters later Maddie Lerma of the Renegades drew a bases loaded walk to tie the score and send the game to extra innings where the two teams would play International Tiebreaker rules.

After Lerma, who came in to pitch in the sixth, struck out the side in the top of the eighth, the Renegades got their chance to win the game in their half of the eighth. With Sue Tomey beginning the eighth as a base runner on second, Tomey then advanced to third following a Hirata ground ball out to first base. With the winning run now at third, and the ever dangerous Gourley up to bat, it was Gourley who worked her magic once again with yet another late inning clutch hit as Gourley slapped the ball to leftfield that found its way between third and short scoring Tomey who emphatically jumped on home plate for the winning run. The team celebrated their 5-4 victory near firstbase as the almost three hour game ended at approximately 11:20pm.

Gourley had three of the four Renegade hits on the night and finished the game with a final stat line of 3 for 4 with 2 RBIs, including the game winner. Tarin Marks contributed with two RBIs.

Although the Comets did not win the game, Gill was a workhorse for her Comets team going the distance allowing only four hits while striking out nine Renegades batters.

Lerma turned in three solid innings of relief work for the Renegades as Lerma allowed one run and one hit and fanned a total of six batters.

Carly Evans had the only two hit game for the Comets finishing 2 for 4 with an RBI. Bobbi Axton, Gill, Andrade and Allie Kleinsmith all chipped in with a base hit each. Lindsey Willmon had a second inning RBI.

Although the Comets are 1-3 in this year's ASA 12U Nationals tournament, they have played four very competitive games and could easily be 4-0 after suffering losses by one run, two runs and now one run again.

The Comets will take their solid play to the loser's bracket where the Comets will square off against the Orland Sparks at the Sacramento Softball Complex, Friday at 11:00am.

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