

SPORT

LAMORINDAS LOCAL SPORT NEWS



Dons Tame Cougars

by Jaime Zepeda

Acalanes felt the pressure, but stayed composed. In a game packed with stellar defense and equally great intensity, the Weston Ranch Cougars let a win slip, and the Dons advanced to

squad. The game began laced with fervor. Both teams showed the adrenaline pumping through their veins by fumbling passes and bouncing balls of their feet. But the shaky start quickly



the Regional Semifinals. The Dons and the Cougars both came into the CIF State Regional playoff game with

faded. Acalanes began to make a string of defensive stops, fast breaks, and capitalized with points on the board. It took them a quarter, but Weston Ranch eventually saw the edge in offensive speed the Dons had, and changed their strategy. By using a full court press, the Cougars made life hard for the Dons and created one certainty. The Cougars did not lose because of their defense.

Weston Ranch looked positioned to take down the North Coast Section champions when they went on a 6-0 run



impressive records.

The stakes were set and the gym split. The blue-laden Acalanes fans starkly contrasted the red and grey Cougars faithful.

While the Acalanes fans vastly outnumbered the Cougars', both relentlessly cheered for their respective

in the beginning of the 2nd quarter. They continued to find success in the full court press. The constant pressure forced the Dons to miss a lot of opportunities under the bucket. Momentum stayed with the red and grey, as the first half finished and the Cougars lead 25-21.

The second half began

Orioles top the Rangers in MBA Matchup

by Jonathan Glidden

One of the most compelling matchups of the afternoon pitted the Rangers against the Orioles in a fast paced match up that went down to the final inning.

Conditions were nearly perfect as hundreds of parents and baseball aficionados piled into JM field 2 to watch what proved to be one of the most exciting games of the season. As the teams took the field it was clear from the expressions and the body language of the players that this game would be a battle to the very end.

The action started off with a spectacular diving catch by Orioles short-stop Ben Skinner behind second base. The Rangers countered by scoring two runs in the second. Then in third, in his first hit of his MBA career, first-year Orioles player Noah Bagley nailed a two RBI shot to right field.

Despite solid pitching by Orioles Ben Skinner, Patrick Ratford, and Danielle Thomas and by Rangers star Tyler Bartis, both teams managed to score five runs in the first four innings.

Then, in the fifth, the Orioles scored two runs to break the tie. They were then able to hold on for the 7-5 victory.

The game featured outstanding individual performances on both sides. For the Orioles, Ben Skinner went 2-for-3, with 2 runs, and a whopping 5 stolen bases. Matthew Tuan went 2-for-2 with a double, a run, and two stolen bases. Marty Cunnane added two runs and two stolen bases.

On the Rangers side, Tyler Bartis batted a thousand, going 3-for-3, with two doubles, a run, an RBI, and two stolen bases. Brendan Purtil went 1-for-3, with a run, and two stolen bases. Ryan Geisreiter went 1-for-3, with a run, an RBI, and three stolen bases.

The player of the game for the winning team was Matthew Tuan who was the owner of the hardest hit ball in the game, a 60 ft. left center, though he was thrown out.

"We played well defensively, and pretty good offense," said Oriole second baseman Christopher Daniel.

with the game up for grabs. Both teams were now familiar with their opponent's strategies and modified accordingly.

The third quarter let both teams show off their muscle on the paint. For Weston Ranch, No. 22 made his presence known both offensively and defensively. Acalanes had No. 15 to rely on as the big man down low. The game became a test of stamina and strength.

At this point, Acalanes began to reveal their successful second half strategy. While the Cougars had tremendous hustle and a tenacious defense, the Dons played an intelligent game. They frustrated the Cougars by constantly double-teaming No.22, their go-to-guy, forcing him to attempt shots in traffic. Defensively, both teams excelled. The Cougar defense made their presence known through blocked shots, steals, and tipped passes. The Dons flexed their defensive prowess by switching off defenders and quick anticipation.

In the end, the Cougars failed to acknowledge the plays that didn't work for them, and were shut down by the Dons. Thanks to their defense though they were only 2 points behind the Dons with under 6 minutes left in the 4th quarter. Hope was still alive.

Weston Ranch continued to steal balls and capitalize with jumpers and post-ups. Acalanes stayed firm by never letting their guard down.

A pivotal point in the game came with a little over 2 minutes left. Cougars' No. 32 stole the ball, was fouled and adds a point to the team's tally. Soon after, however, Weston Ranch's No. 21 sunk a huge 3-pointer with less than 22 seconds left. Weston Ranch had a chance to tie the game. That is, until Acalanes broke away once more and got an easy layup. The game was out of reach as soon as Weston Ranch could only make one free throw in their next possession. Acalanes won 50-47 over the Cougars by playing smart basketball.

Acalanes then went on to play Sacramento High School on Saturday, March 10th and came up with the win 58-43. Next up is Bishop O'Dowd on March 17th. The Dons are hoping for some deja vu since O'Dowd is the same team they beat for the North Coast Section title.

Girls Softball

Stanford wins over Cal 16:3

In front of dozens of spirited fans, the 6th through 8th grade softball team began its 2007 season on March 10 at 8 am. The first game, played under ideal conditions, bright sunshine, and the clear morning skies that Lamorinda is famous for, saw a match-up from legendary rivals, Stanford and Cal.

Emily Streeter of Stanford played an outstanding game, hitting two home runs including a grand slam. Tela Zemsch executed a near-perfect bunt for another run. Stanford's Rebecca Crip pitched 3 innings for the win, and Ashley Heim pitched 3 innings of shut-out ball in relief.

Cal's pitchers, Sarah Martin, Sam Flowers and Lily Zwang, divided the innings 2 by 2. The Cal team scored three runs, but it was not enough to overtake the fierce Stanford offense. Stanford won, 16:3.

A Classic Battle by Malia McClurg

To attend a Yankees versus Red Sox game, one would typically need a plane flight, hotel reservation, vacation time and a penchant for great games. Luckily, now only the latter is necessary, because we needn't look any farther than our own back yard for such an opportunity. Thanks to the Lafayette-Moraga Youth Association and the beginning of softball season, weekly match ups such as the one this past weekend will be available to parents, fans and community members.

On Saturday, March 10th, under a bright sun and clear blue sky, LMYA's only two softball teams from Orinda took the field at Stanley Middle School in Lafayette. This game marked the opening of the

season. These two Orinda teams, the Red Sox and Yankees, will play this season with four other teams from Lafayette and Moraga.

Despite on meeting for one or two practices before this game, both teams worked well together.

Both sides had family, friends, coaches and teammates cheering and shouting words of encouragement throughout the game. Although almost all of the girls have played softball before, the Red Sox team has a player who is completely new to softball this year. The Red Sox coaches, Davis, Colwell and assistant Coach Blain were very proud of how well she played and particularly noted her strength as a catcher. Another example of the team-

work and skill of these girls is that almost every girl on the Red Sox team got at least one hit. Plus, the pitching roster was able to strike out six Yankees in five innings.

In the end, though, it was Coach Kovalic and the Yankee's that took it. The final score that closed this opening day was 14 to 9.

But, the Red Sox have another chance. These two teams will face off again on April 21st in what is sure to be a close game. These teams have the opportunity to hone their skills, practice together more, and show up to the game in April ready to show off what they've learned.

For more information about softball schedules and upcoming games, check out lmysports.com or stay tuned for continuing coverage of all local sports events.

MBA

by Jonathan Glidden

We've all seen them, the goliaths of the Moraga Baseball Association. Perhaps we've even marveled at their spectacular talent and determination. But how much do we really know about these enigmatic superstars. In a special Lamorinda Weekly exclusive, we go behind the scenes to find out more about these future all-stars.

As I wandered the fields of JM, trying to remain inconspicuous with my bright red notebook and digital camera, I pondered how best to approach one of the uniform-clad middle-schoolers. After all, why would any of these prodigies want to take time talk to talk to me? A little intimidated, I tried the indirect approach. I tried walking back and forth past families and giving people expectant looks, but all I accomplished was to appear slightly creepy. Finally, I gathered my courage and decided to go up and talk to them.

The first played I talked to was Grant Bartis, an eight-year-old first baseman, for the Padres. Despite his status, he was surprisingly down to earth and willing to grant interviews. He is a five year veteran of MBA and his favorite position is first place because he likes to "catch a lot action." He

practices three days a week because "there is no pressure, it's just free." He has made a lot of friends through baseball.

After having such success with my first interview, I decided to try talking to two players at once. I began talking with Chase Carallo a ten-year-old short stop/catcher for the A's and his eight-year-old outfielder teammate Jake Tenerowicz. At first, it was just like any other interview, they were, justifiably, a little skeptical as to whether I was a real reporter, but overall it was going pretty well. I learned that they had both played since t-ball, and that the greatest play of Chase's career was when he "scooped a ball and then threw it for a double play" and the best of Jake's career was when he "almost caught a ball."

After a few minutes, we were approached by their friend Tray Westernoff an eleven-year-old seven-year MBA veteran who plays short and pitches for the Moraga

Mariners. The best play of his career was when he "hit a really good double."

At this point, I was getting a little flustered trying keep up with all three of them sharing their baseball experiences simultaneously, but my journalistic duty compelled me to push on.

Next they called over their friend Allison Stevens, an eleven year old whose team won 17-3 that day in a game where she went 4-4 and hit four doubles, and her brother Cole, a nine-year-old first baseman.

Now I was getting pretty overwhelmed, and was beginning to formulate an exit strategy. Then, in slow motion, I saw Jake turn to his entire team, and motion for them to come over. The background noise went silent and all I heard was his words reverberating through my cerebellum: "Come on guys, we're getting interviewed

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Lamorinda Players, Coaches, and Fans

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