

## Stanford fights to a 6-1 record

Contributed by Mark Zembsch

Stanford and USC, in first and third place respectively atop the standings in 6th-8th grade LMYA softball, thrilled the crowd at Stanley Middle School on May 12 in a game highlighted by outstanding plays on defense and aggressive long-ball hitting by both teams. Stanford's dominating pitching in the early-going provided the difference, however, as Stanford won 16-10. Stanford improved to 6-1 for the season, and USC moved to 4-3-1.

The story of the game was Stanford's pitching and defense -- critical to building an insurmountable 12-0 lead after five innings. Stanford's pitching was led by starter Rachel Kelley's three shutout innings, earning Kelley her third win of the season. Rebecca Crisp held USC scoreless in the fourth and fifth innings by striking out five.

Crisp preserved the shutout through five innings by stranding USC's Kat Mathis at third, after Mathis' long triple. Stanford again enjoyed contributions on offense from all 11 players, led by Siena Del Ponte's two long home runs (matching the feat established by teammate Emily Streeter in the first game of the season). Stanford's Crisp was outstanding on the bases, scampering home four times.

Besides Del Ponte's power surge,

Stanford's Emily Streeter hit for extra bases twice, and Crisp also doubled. Stanford's defense was nearly flawless, again led by Kayla Wiggins, who made a thrilling outfield catch of one of the longest-hit balls of the season, off the bat of USC's Mathis.

Grace Lovell led USC with three base hits; Kat Mathis and Natalie Deskin each slugged an extra base hit deep into an outfield gap. Jessie Kathan also contributed with two base hits and two runs scored. USC turned in several key plays on defense as well, led by Mathis' command behind the plate, Kathan's snag of a line drive at third base, and Deskin's solid play at short.

The May 12 game followed one of the best-played games of the season between the two rivals on Cinco de Mayo at la escuela de Joaquin Moraga. Both teams provided numerous thrilling pitcher-batter duels, heads-up base-running and outstanding defensive performances on that May 5 morning, with Stanford winning 15-10.

Stanford enjoyed great pitching from starter Rachel Kelley (earning her second win of the season), Rebecca Crisp (striking out six in her two innings of work), and Ashley Heim (picking up the key save). Stanford's offense continued to be well-balanced, as all 10 players scored at least one

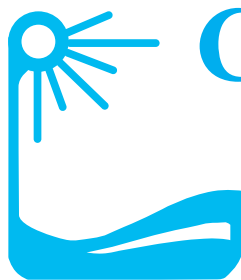
run each.

Stanford's 15-run attack was led by Emily Streeter and Rikki Starks, who clubbed key extra-base hits; Karen Ranstrom, Emma Harris and Joelle Alley reached base multiple times and scored two runs each. Stanford, which has benefited by great defense all season, seemingly ended each inning with a breath-taking "web gem," highlighted by Kayla Wiggins' two outstanding catches, and Tela Zembsch's sterling glove work at second base.

UCLA's 10-run offense was led by Maile Hoyt (two doubles), Sarah Reynolds (two hits and three runs scored), Kalena Alva (two hits and two runs scored). UCLA pitcher Natalie Goepel impressed with her dominating three strike-out performance against the three batters she faced.

The season will be decided on June 2, with four games each remaining for Stanford and UCLA, and with third place USC continuing its charge in the second half of the season.

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