

Slams help North whip Chargers

It was a grand day for softball Monday, at least from the perspective of North Farmington.

The Raiders began slams in consecutive innings on their way to a 14-2 victory over visiting Livonia Churchill in a Western Lakes Activities Association crossover game called after six innings because of the mercy rule.

Courtney Knapp cleared the bases in the fifth inning to collect four of her five RBI, and teammate Marni Aaronson followed suit in the sixth frame while pinch-hitting for Knapp.

Debbie Weinstein pitched all six innings for North to pick up the victory. She allowed only four hits, while walking two and fanning eight. The Raiders collected 11 hits off losing pitcher Marilee Grom. In addition to Knapp and Aaronson, other North batters who had big games included Kim Gurecki, Melanie Peltz, Pam Gressler and Kelly Coulson.

Gurecki had a two-run triple in the third inning to tie the game at two, and Knapp's RBI groundout scored Gurecki with the go-ahead run in that inning. Gressler and Coulson contributed two hits apiece to the Raiders' cause. Peltz had an RBI single and Dana Botwick scored three runs.

The win improved North's record to 8-9 in the league and 9-8 overall.

FRANKLIN 14, FARMINGTON 2: Livonia Franklin topped Farmington Monday in a WLAAC crossover game that was halted after five innings because of the mercy rule.

Winning pitcher Jenny Mayle held the Falcons to only one hit. Conversely, the visiting Patriots collected 15 hits off of Farmington hurler Lisa Rockefeller and Lisa Gale.

The Falcons scored their runs in the first inning. Melissa Tisdale tripled in the first run and then scored on a passed ball.

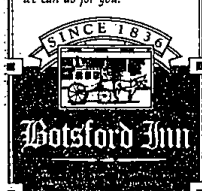
Linda Kulesha had three hits to lead Franklin, and Leslie Sznitarski, Sandy Hertel and Maria Vassiliou also had two RBI.

The defeat dropped Farmington to 3-13 in the league and 6-16 overall, while Franklin moved to 12-4 and 14-8.

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Regina pitcher handcuffs Blazers, 4-0

By Steve Kowalski
staff writer

Livonia Ladywood didn't get a hit off Harper Woods Regina pitcher Denise Nicker until the seventh inning of Monday's Catholic League A-B division softball final, and by then Nicker already had struck out 13 Blazers batters.

In other words, Ladywood was merely delaying the inevitable.

Nicker was in total command, tossing a two-hitter and leading state-ranked Regina to a 4-0 victory over the upstart Blazers at Dearborn's King Boring Field. Senior shortstop Jenny Littlefield had two hits and drove in two runs for the winners.

The win improved Nicker's personal record to 18-2 and it raised Regina's overall mark to 33-7. Ladywood (10-13 overall) played four regular-season games against

the Saddletles, but the Blazers were never outmatched against Nicker — until Monday.

THE WIN was the third straight Catholic League crown for Regina, a Class A semifinalist last year.

"This one feels good," Regina coach Diane Laffey said. "It's hard to do three times in a row. Denise threw a no-hitter Friday night (in an A-B semifinal win over Southgate Aquinas), and I almost thought she was going to come up with another one tonight."

"She's throwing a better rise and curve-ball. She's worked hard."

Ladywood reached the final by beating Dearborn Divine Child, 5-3 in nine innings Saturday in the semifinal at Boring Field. After being no-hit for six innings Monday, Ladywood third baseman Jenny Kennedy led off the seventh with a single but was forced out at second on a ground ball hit by Lisa

Bienda. With two outs and Bienda on first, Kim Supron got the Blazers second hit, sending Bienda to second with a single, but Nicker got Jomarie Skurtovich to pop out and end the Blazers' agony.

Nicker set the side down in order in the second, third and fourth innings, and at one point fanned 10 of 11 batters in the middle innings.

"SHE THREW hard today, the best I've seen her throw all year," Ladywood coach Kim Linenger said. "She was on. When we finally started hitting it was too late. She is a Division I pitcher."

Ladywood pitcher Shannon White probably dreamed a better fate, as she surrendered only six hits, and gave up single runs in the second, third, fifth and sixth innings.

White retired the side in order in the bottom of the first but got in trouble in the sec-

ond when Regina opened the scoring on a walk, stolen base and two force outs.

Littlefield, the leadoff batter, gave Regina a 2-0 lead in the third when Ladywood right fielder Julie Wilson misplayed Littlefield's fly ball into a solo home run. Mary Campana tripled with one out in the fourth and scored on a ground out for Regina's third run and Littlefield added an RBI single in the sixth with two outs.

"DEFENSIVELY, we broke down and we can't do that against a team like this," Linenger said. "All in all, I'm very pleased to come this far with this group."

The Saddletles will meet the Public School League champion, yet to be determined, in the Operation Friendship Championship game, at 5 p.m. Tuesday, June 6, at Boring Field.

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