

Mets, Dodgers play each other like a chess game

By MICHAEL LETENDRE
STAFF WRITER

BRISTOL – In a battle for a spot in the Bristol Little League Softball Series championship, the Mets and Dodgers let it all hang out from the McCabe-Waters softball field on Aug. 23.

Little League Softball

And with the contest resembling a human game of chess with move after move, and lead after lead gained and lost, it was really anybody's game going into the sixth and final inning of play.

The Mets were ahead in the top of the sixth by an 8-6

tally but even down two runs, the Dodgers would not bow out quietly.

An RBI single by Hayley Knox and a bases-loaded walk by Sarah Corliss notched two runs and tied things up at 8-8, putting the pressure on the Mets to either respond in the bottom of sixth stanza or go to an extra frame.

The Mets decided to respond.

Shelby Sandstrom led off the inning for the Mets with a shot to shortstop but the ball wasn't fielded cleanly and the winning run was on first-base.

One wild pitch and a stolen base later, Sandstrom was ready to score from third and it was up to Caleigh Lozito to get that game-winning tally.

Off a 2-0 count, Lozito

drove a single to center-field – scoring Sandstrom – as the Mets pulled off an improbable 9-8 win.

It wasn't all fun for the Mets as the Dodgers held a 4-2 lead midway through the game and Bill Pratt's squad was looking extremely tough.

"These girls, when they were picked for this team, were all picked on their attitude," said Mets coach Tammy Strum. "They all want to learn, they all want to play, and even the other day when we were down 10 runs going into the fourth inning, they don't quit. That's why they're on this team (and) that's why I picked them."

It was a pitcher's duel as both Issie Pratt from the Dodgers and Madeline Strum for the Mets both

showed toughness and tenacity on the mound.

But Strum's change-up was hard to touch as she racked up an impressive 12 strikeouts including striking out six batters over the first two frames of play to keep the Dodgers at bay.

"That was the best game she's ever pitched," said Strum of Madeline. "I'm proud of her."

Pratt showed plenty of guile as well, giving up only five hits and punching out six batters.

An RBI single by Knox netted the first run of the game to post the Dodgers to a 1-0 stake but off an error, the Mets tied the game 1-1 after one completed inning.

The Mets seized the lead in the second as a wild pitch plated MacKenzie Jankowski to go up 2-1 after

two.

Grabbing the momentum in the top of the third, Driscoll cranked out a two-run in-the-park homerun and off an error – scoring Knox from third after she smoked a triple to right – the Dodgers reclaimed the lead at 4-2.

The Mets came right back with three in the bottom of the third to retake the lead at 5-4.

It was all small-ball as four consecutive bunts – including RBI sacrifices by Nicole D'Amato and Sarah Strilkauskus – put the Mets on top by one.

"We got our fast runners on base," said Strum. "All the other girls just bunted them in. They did the job and they did it well."

In the top of the fourth, the Dodgers again went

ahead as a past-ball scored Bailey Weyerbeck and an RBI single by Julia Dowd gave the visitors a 6-5 push.

But again, the Mets surged in front with a three-run fourth as a passed ball and a two-run RBI by Strum made it an 8-6 game in the Mets' favor.

Both teams went quietly in the fifth before the two teams made late game heroics as the Mets were the ultimate survivors.

To say the least, coach Strum and her squad are looking forward to a rematch with the Dodgers for a chance to advance to the championship against the Tigers.

"Absolutely," said Strum about being ready for one last showdown with the Dodgers. "It's going to be exciting."

Tigers and Mets to square off for city softball crown

By MICHAEL LETENDRE
STAFF WRITER

BRISTOL – For the second straight year, the McCabe-Waters, Edgewood and Forestville Little Leagues have combined to form "Bristol Girls Little League Softball."

Over the past couple weeks, five squads have challenged each other and

battled to determine who would play for the "City Series" championship, which is taking place from the lower softball field at McCabe-Waters.

In the championship round, the well-rested Tigers will square off against the Mets in the best-of-three series which started on Aug. 30 and will run to September 3 (if necessary).

Little League Softball

Here is a quick update on all the scores from tournament action to date:

Aug. 19: Qualifying Game

Angels 16,
Reds 13

Aug. 23: Semifinal Action

Dodgers 14,
Mets 13

Tigers 12,
Angels 2

Aug. 25: Semifinal Action

Tigers 13, Amanda Stone (1-for-3, 3 RBI), Jen Tabacco (1-for-2, 3 runs)

Aug. 27: Semifinal Action

Angels 2 Lexi Calfe (2-for-2, 2 runs), Michaela Sassu (2-for-2)

Tigers (2-0) advance to the championship round

Mets 9, Madeline Strum (6 IP, 12 K's), Caleigh Lozito (3-for-3)

Dodgers 8 McKenna Driscoll (2-for-2, 2 RBI, 3 runs)

Aug. 27: Semifinal Action

Mets 4, Strum (1-hitter, 4 K's), Sarah Strilkauskus (2-for-3)

Dodgers 1 Driscoll (1-for-3, RBI)

Mets (2-1) advance to the championship round

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both Cydney Martin and Sarah Corliss to end the frame with the Mets still on top 1-0 after two completed innings.

The Mets added another run in the third stanza off an RBI single by Nicole D'Amato that scored Strum but as Strilkauskus attempted to score from first-base, she was gunned down at home off a quick tag by McKenna Driscoll. The Mets' lead was limited to only 2-0.

In the bottom of the third, the Dodgers got onto the scoreboard off an RBI single to center by Driscoll, scoring Bailey Wyrebeck, to cut the deficit to 2-1.

But on that same play, the Dodgers' Issie Pratt was gunned down at home plate and Driscoll was thrown out trying to reach third as the inning-ending double-play kept the Mets in the lead 2-

1. "It came down to our three 12-year-olds of (Strum, Lozito and catcher Shelby (Sandstrom) behind the plate," said Strum. "(Sandstrom) was blocking all those balls (behind the plate) and everybody else just fit right in."

In the fourth, Alexa Caron scored for the Mets off a throwing error to first-base to make it a 3-1 and just when the Dodgers were looking to seize the lead in the game in the bottom-half of the frame, another double-play ball killed the rally.

Strum walked the bases full with as the go-ahead run was at first-base for the Dodgers with one out in the inning.

On a 3-1 count, Devin Croce popped up to short as Lozito made the catch. She quickly whirled the ball to third as the runner, who was off the bag, was also called

out as another inning-ending double-play kept the Dodgers down by a 3-1 margin.

The Mets added a little insurance in the top of the fifth as an RBI single by Lozito scored Strilkauskus to make it a 4-1 game.

"We tried to lay off the

bunts a little bit more tonight because (the Dodgers) were a little more prepared for them," said Strum. "In the beginning, we had troubles getting the bats going and tonight, they had their bats going."

The Dodgers put runners on in the fifth and sixth

innings but did not score as the Mets were propelled to a championship date with the Tigers.

"We've been ready for a while," said Strum. "We want it this year."

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