



Raul Roa | La Cañada Valley Sun

LA CAÑADA HIGH pitcher Holly Stoner, who was named the Rio Hondo League Pitcher of the Year, went 12-5 with a 1.54 earned-run average in 20 appearances.

Stoner's super year leads to top award

Softball: Sophomore right-hander put up quality numbers to help Spartans win Rio Hondo League championship.

BY CHARLES RICH

Backed by a solid core of talent throughout the diamond, the La Cañada High softball team retained the Rio Hondo League championship.

One of the key players to deliver the Spartans success was sophomore starting pitcher Holly Stoner, a right-hander who had minimal varsity experience entering the season.

A full season on the varsity stage didn't seem to intimidate Stoner, who was

named the league's pitcher of the year.

"I just wanted to go out there and prove myself because it's all about doing your job," said Stoner, who was brought up from the junior varsity team late last season. "You try to make the adjustments to do whatever you can to help your team."

Stoner often answered the bell for La Cañada (19-7, 11-1 in league). The Spartans advanced to the second round of the CIF Southern Section Division

IV playoffs, falling on the road to Santa Monica after beating Rialto.

"It's cool to win league and go to the playoffs," Stoner said. "We felt coming in that we had a very good team and a chance to win league. Our confidence seemed to keep on building."

Stoner went 12-5 with a 1.54 earned-run average in 20 appearances. She struck out 107 and walked 35 in 95 2/3 innings. Stoner

See **Stoner**, page A13.

THURSDAY, JUNE 16, 2016

Sports

STONER

Continued from page A9

yielded 64 hits and 30 runs (21 earned).

Stoner credited her success to La Cañada assistant Baillie Kirker, a former All-Area Softball Player of the Year at Crescenta Valley.

"Baillie put in a lot of time to work with me on improving my pitching," Stoner said. "I'd take extra lessons with her and she showed me a lot of different things, like working on mechanics and different pitches. We were also lucky to have her as a coach at school."

Stoner's work in the circle proved to be valuable for the Spartans.

"When we started the season, we weren't sure who our No. 1 pitcher would be," La Cañada first-year Coach Chuck Gunter said. "Holly came up and asked what it would take to be the No. 1 pitcher and she wanted to be that."

"She was easy for Taryn [Harris] to catch and she got a lot of strikeouts. She's open to trying anything new. She's already talking about coming back stronger next year."

charles.rich@latimes.com
Twitter: @TCNCharlesRich