

## Reliable Stoner allows La Cañada softball to be patient in victory



La Cañada High pitcher Holly Stoner, left, and Alexis Abboud were all smiles following a 3-1 Rio Hondo League victory over Temple City on Friday. (Tim Berger / La Cañada Valley Sun)



By **Andrew J. Campa**

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**I**n two meetings this season, the La Cañada High softball team has had its issues versus Temple City freshman pitcher Gillian Molina.

The youngster has used an array of pitches to confound and stifle the Spartans.

Perhaps the best piece of news for La Cañada, though, is that Molina has only been the second-best pitcher on the diamond.

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While offense took a while to get going, the visiting Spartans again relied on the steely pitching of junior Holly Stoner, who fanned nine batters in La Cañada's 3-1 victory Friday afternoon.

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The win was the 17th in a row in league for the Spartans (12-3, 8-0), who sit 2 1/2 games ahead of idle Monrovia (10-9-1, 5-2).

While Spartans Coach Chuck Gunter was happy with the win, the second-year coach was also relieved to have Stoner on his side.

"It's a blessing to have Holly, but it's also bad because sometimes the girls rely too much on her to get them out of jams," Gunter said. "It really makes coaching easy for me knowing she can be relied on."

Stoner allowed one run on five hits and utilized her strikeout capabilities when they were most needed.

With the Spartans leading, 3-0, Temple City (4-12, 3-5) mounted its best offensive surge in the bottom of the sixth when Juliette Marini (two for three with a run and two stolen bases) singled, stole second and advanced to third after a walk and groundout.

Temple City's Amber Arreola drove home Marini on a sacrifice fly for the second out, while Hailey Fawk moved to third after a stolen base.

Stoner walked Temple City's next batter but escaped without further damage when she struck out Taylor Rose looking.

"Temple City has good hitters throughout the lineup and there's no easy part," Stoner said. "I couldn't let up and depended on my defense to make plays behind me."

Stoner's only other difficult inning took place in the first when Marini singled, stole second and advanced to third on a sacrifice.

Stoner struck out Temple City's Codi Weisz before coaxing an inning-ending infield pop up to end the threat.

While Stoner was baffling Temple City hitters, Molina was putting on her own show.

The Temple City hurler had a no-hitter against La Cañada broken up in the sixth inning in the Spartans' 2-0 home victory on April 5 in the teams' first meeting.

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