

Sports

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La Cañada downs Monrovia for outright crown

Softball: Arnold singles home Tinkham in bottom of ninth for 2-1 victory against Wildcats that wraps up league title.

BY NATHAN CAMBRIDGE

LA CAÑADA — In an already stellar softball season for La Cañada High softball, which had already captured at least a share of the Rio Hondo League title, the Spartans looked to wrap up the outright championship when they hosted Monrovia.

On Wednesday, the Spar-

tans kept their unblemished record in Rio Hondo League play, but needed extra time to get it done.

In the ninth inning, La Cañada got the game-winning hit from Gillian Arnold for a 2-1 victory over the visiting Wildcats to win the outright league title.

"I like close games, but

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that was a little too close," La Cañada Coach Chuck Gunter said.

La Cañada (15-4, 10-0 in league) was knotted at 1 with Monrovia (11-11-1, 6-4) going into the ninth.

Spartans hurler Holly Stoner sat the Wildcats down in order in the top of the frame.

In the bottom of the frame, Emily Tinkham led off with her third walk of the day to bring up Arnold.

On the fifth pitch of the at-bat, Tinkham took second on a wild pitch by Wildcats pitcher Ashley Olivia. On the next pitch, facing a full count, Arnold whacked the ball up the middle for a single. Tinkham raced around the bases and touched home comfortably ahead of the throw and the Spartans had the outright crown.

"I was just thinking I had to do my job to pass the bat for my team," Arnold said. "Emily did a great job getting [on base] and I was just working on getting her over."

Stoner was awesome in the circle, going the distance to pick up the win, while allowing four hits. The junior struck out an impressive 15, including at least two an inning from the first through sixth and one apiece in the seventh and eighth.

The Spartans went up early on a gigantic blast by Tinkham in the first. With two outs, the sophomore smashed the fourth pitch of the at-bat that sailed over the left field fence and hit about half-way up the netting. The next three times Tinkham came up to the plate, the Wildcats walked her on four pitches each time, with the final walk leading to the game-winning run.

The hosts got one more hit after the home run in the first inning, a single, and then were held hitless in innings two through eight before finally ending the drought with Arnold's game-winning single in the ninth.