

ES Varsity Softball Wins

By Andrew Thomas

The El Segundo Varsity softball team proved once again how tough it can be on the road, winning twice last week to advance to the CIF semifinals for the third straight year. As was the case last year, the Eagles had to do it by winning their second round and quarterfinal games while on the road.

The Eagles headed to the desert as they faced Indio in round two of the playoffs. With temperatures over 100 degrees, the Eagles came out with hot bats to start the game. They scored three runs in the top of the first inning to take an early 3-0 lead. Sam Heyman started things with a one out single. After a walk to Anissa Noland and another to Gabby Valerio, the Eagles scored three runs on back-to-back singles by Missy Schafer and Erin Burner. Indio got back in the game with two unearned runs in the bottom of the third inning to cut the lead to 3-2.

But the Eagles, as they have done all season long, responded to the threat by Indio. El Segundo scored fourtimes in the fourth inning to take a 7-2 lead. Errors, walks, and a double by Heyman led the way for the Eagles in the fourth inning.

The Eagles were at it again offensively in the sixth inning. They scored four more runs in the inning, highlighted by a two-run double by Erin Burner to take an 11-2 lead.

Indio scored five runs in the bottom of the seventh inning to make things interesting. Eagle starter Jenna Rich, who pitched the first six innings, came back in with two outs in the bottom of the seventh to get the final out for the Eagles. El Segundo won the game by a score of 11-7.

The Eagles were led at the plate by Burner, who was 3-3 with three RBIs, and Heyman with three hits and two RBIs. Rich allowed just two unearned runs and two hits over the first six innings for El Segundo. With the victory, she improved to 18-2 on the mound for the season. With the victory, the Eagles improved to 26-3 on the season.

EAGLES WAIT NINE INNINGS FOR CHECKMATE IN QUARTERFINALS

The Eagles lost the coin toss and were on the road again to face Bishop Amat. The Lady Lancers lost in the Division 4 finals last season, so the Eagles were in for a difficult task in this quarterfinal match-up. Both teams battled back and forth, and when either team threatened to score, the other team responded with outstanding plays. The Eagles would finally land the haymaker in the ninth inning, but before doing so they had to escape trouble on numerous occasions.

Bishop Amat led off the bottom of the sixth inning with a single. A sacrifice bunt put a runner in scoring position, and after a fielders choice, the Lancers had first and third with one out. But Rich battled back. She struck out the Lancers' number three hitter for the second out. The number four batter, Ariel Whiteman, who was also the pitcher, lined a shot down the right field line. Noland raced over to make the catch and end the threat.

In the bottom of the seventh, Bishop Amat

singled to lead off the inning. After a wild pitch, the winning run was at second base with no outs. Cameron ordered an intentional walk to set up a force play. The batter swung at the second pitch of the intentional walk and hit it to dead center. Eagles' centerfielder Dani Hannan raced back towards the fence. With the Bishop Amat football team screaming at her back, Hannan made an over-the-shoulder attempt at the ball. The ball slightly popped out of her glove before she snagged it and quickly threw it back to second. The Lancer runner was napping and did not tag up and advance to third. But the Eagles were still not out of trouble.

The next batter hit a ground ball to short. The ball was thrown away, but stayed in play. First baseman Taylor Gonzalez raced to get the ball, and fired to the plate, thus holding the runner at third. Rich then induced two straight infield pop-ups to send the game into extra innings.

Bishop Amat threatened again in the bottom of the eighth inning. A leadoff single and an error put the runner on second. The next batter hit a comebacker to the mound at Rich. She fired over to the shortstop Schafer, who was racing over to cover third. Schafer applied the tag just in time to get the first out of the inning and stop another rally. A ground out and line drive out ended the eighth with the game still scoreless.

Heyman led off in the top of the ninth inning for the Eagles and proceeded to hit a shot to the left-centerfield gap for a double. Noland then sacrificed her to third, and the Eagles had the go-ahead run just 60 feet away with one out. Valerio hit a bullet to the second baseman. Heyman was running on contact. Valerio was safe at first on the play. Heidi Skulick entered as a runner and promptly stole second, giving the Eagles runners on second and third with one out. Schafer fouled off three straight two-strike pitches before being hit by a pitch to load the bases. After Burner flied out to short left, freshman Julia Smith, who had entered the game in the eighth inning, stepped up to the plate for the Eagles. She hit a shot up the middle that hit off the pitcher's ankle. It rolled to the shortstop, who threw to first too late. Heyman scored and the Eagles had a 1-0 lead. The Eagles took the 1-0 lead into the bottom of the ninth when they were once again pushed to the limit.

Bishop Amat singled to lead off the bottom of the ninth inning. A sacrifice bunt put the tying run in scoring position with one out. The next batter had an infield hit that gave the Lancers runners on first and second with one out. The next batter singled to left, and Eagles left fielder Skulick fired a bullet to the plate. The runner ran through a stop sign at third from her coach. She then stopped halfway between third and home, slipped, but was able to scamper back to the third base bag. Now the Lancers had the bases loaded with one out. But the next batter missed a squeeze attempt and the Eagles were able to tag the runner out in a rundown between third and home for the second out. The Lancers then grounded out for the final out of the game. The Eagles were victorious 1-0 and had clinched a spot in the Division 4 semifinals. •

State of the City

from front page

of our city, our nation and the world and it is exceedingly difficult right now to do business as usual.

You, your families and your businesses have been adapting to this new environment. In El Segundo you have been doing it exceptionally well and I congratulate you. It isn't easy. City government has been adapting, too and I want to compliment our staffers on implementing innovative cost cuts without sacrificing programs.

I also want to compliment our staff for their hard work to attract new businesses to our city and keep the ones we have already. Some of their work may be backfill right now, bringing in business to offset downsizing, but it's working and it's working well.

That kind of work means that the business news in our city is actually good. Let's take a look at some examples of what's been happening in our business community. Yes, we have seen some sources of revenue decline, along with layoffs and other adjustments. But as a community we've adapted to what's going on and will continue to do that in order to provide the superior level of service that we pride ourselves on in the City of El Segundo. The unemployment rate in El Segundo is five percent – less than half that of the state as a whole. El Segundo's office vacancy rate is nine percent – far lower than the regional average.

Start with Gehry Partners, headed by Frank Gehry, probably the planet's most famous architect. He and his team will settle into their El Segundo headquarters in the Douglas Street corridor this summer. Their move is a sign of the growing importance of the creative business sector in our city.

I am confident that Frank Gehry's move to El Segundo together with his real estate partner Larry Field and their firm called NSB, will further boost our creative business sector and make us a leader in that field.

And just last week Rhythm and Hues, an Academy Award-winning visual effects studio, closed a deal to take over CSC's former headquarters campus. Recognized internationally as one of Hollywood's top visual effects and animation facilities, Rhythm & Hues has more than 100 feature films to its credit and is an industry leader in the production of commercial advertising. They will be moving their headquarters and 750 member staff to El Segundo by year's end.

Ad agencies Ignited and David & Goliath are also part of our city now, and that shows the vitality and growth of the creative sector in our business community.

We're beating the trend with other newcomers, too, which we are delighted to welcome to El Segundo. They include COM DEV USA, whose headquarters opened just a few months ago and which is our first foreign-owned defense contractor, with their products playing critical roles on over 600 satellites in orbit.

Welcome, too, to Karl Storz and Rapid-7 – both of them distinguished leaders in

their fields.

Some of our new partners are big; some are smaller, like NanoH20. Thanks to Dr. Tony Laviano, a pioneer in nanotechnology, for helping our city's efforts to be the leader in that fast-growing and far-reaching part of technology; and for helping us convince NanoH20 to come here.

And Continental Development continues to welcome new tenants at its business park on Rosecrans Boulevard, including Paul Martin's American Bistro, which joins its very successful affiliates already there, P.F. Chang's and Fleming's Steakhouse.

It's all about jobs – we all know that – and in 2008 El Segundo actually gained about 1,000 new jobs, while unemployment in the state and the nation doubled. Despite the general state of the economy, in 2009 we expect about 2,000 new jobs to be added in our city.

We're proud of that and we're proud that stalwart firms like Mattel and DirecTV call our city home. Speaking of Mattel, happy birthday Barbie! I know you just turned fifty, but you're holding up incredibly well. Congratulations to Mattel on an amazing run with a product that has become an icon worldwide.

In other significant developments, Northrop Grumman has leased the entire 15-story, 320,000 square foot building formerly known as the Xerox Centre and the company will add over 500 El Segundo employees this year.

Our entire aerospace community deserves tremendous credit in keeping our city's economy sound. El Segundo mainstays like Boeing Satellite and the companies I just mentioned--plus scores of others like SAIC, which now calls El Segundo home--deserve tremendous credit. They are the rock-solid foundation of our city's economy. Boeing, by the way just opened its new Mission Control Center here and it is a fabulous asset to their operation – and ultimately the nation.

Let's not forget Aerospace Corp. or the United States Air Force, either. We are incredibly proud to host the only military installation in the region, Los Angeles Air Force Base. This city supports our country's armed services in every way it can. One example is Mar Ventures' MEPS project on Grand Avenue, the new processing facility for new recruits in all service branches, which is nearing completion and will support our armed services in a critical way.

But it's not just the big companies that keep our economy strong. It's companies like Citizens' Business Bank and S&S Hardware that make up a huge part of our business base and support our community. And it's not just companies in our city that help us and the Chamber. Washington Iron Works, represented here today by Chris Powell, for years has invested its resources in El Segundo.

In other business developments, El Se-
See State, page 15

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