

2011 LSCA ALL STAR WEEK END

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Welch's HR propels East to softball all-star victory

West 9, East 8

East 000 080 0— 8 15 3

West 102 002 4— 9 14 0

W — Kacie Franklin 1IP, 0R, 1H. L — Chelsea Leblanc 4IP, 6R, 2ER, 8H, 7K, BB. Leading Hitters: EAST — Alexis Gremillion 2-4, HR, 3 RBIs; Malorie Zumbro 2-3, Victoria Huggins 2-2, 3B, RBI; Tiffany Robinson 1-3, 2 RBIs; Kayla Tullos 1-3, 2B, RBI; Tori Davis 2-3, 2-2B, RBI; WEST — Kix Hutchins 3-5, 3B, 3 RBIs; Meagan Thomas 3-3, 2 R; Shelbie Reed 2-3, RBI; Brooke David 2-4, 2 RBIs; Mariel Meche 2-3, RBI.

East 5, West 1

West 000 100 0 — 1 5 1

East 040 001 x — 5 8 2

W — Paige Fink. L — Kacie Franklin. LEADERS: West — Brooke David (2-2, 2B); East — Doren Welch (2-2, HR, 3 RBIs), Tiffany Robinson (2-3, 2B), Megan Loque (2-3).

BY BRET H. MCCORMICK

Special to The Advocate

PINEVILLE — One day after an offensive shootout, hits were at a premium during the second game of the Louisiana High School Coaches Association's all-star softball weekend.

The East team evened the two-game series, riding the arms of Paige Fink, Savannah Dollar and Chelsea Leblanc, and the bat of Doren Welch in a 5-1 victory.

The West rallied Friday night, scoring four runs in the bottom of the seventh inning to take a 9-8 victory.

Trailing by four runs heading into the seventh on Saturday, the West couldn't muster any more magic.

Notre Dame's Taylor Simon and Rayne's Mariel Meche hit back-to-back one-out singles, but East Ascension's Leblanc, the losing pitcher in Friday's game, nailed the door shut to pick up the save.

Jena's Fink started the game and pitched three scoreless innings, while Dollar of West Monroe gave up one unearned run in two innings of relief. The three East pitchers combined to give up five hits, striking out five and walking one batter.

Welch, a third baseman from False River Academy who is headed to LSU-Eunice, provided more than enough pop for the East, which saw a five-run lead disappear on Friday. Welch turned on an 0-1 fastball from St. Louis pitcher Kacie Franklin in the second inning and hit it high and deep over the left-field fence at Coca-Cola Lady Wildcat Field on the campus of Louisiana College.

The three-run blast gave the East team an early four-run cushion that it didn't relinquish.

"She just found my spot that I wasn't really hitting yesterday," Welch said. "I decided I needed to turn faster on the inside pitch."

Welch, who also singled in the first inning and went 3-for-5 over the two games, was named the East team's Most Valuable Player.

Airline's Kix Hutchins, who hit a three-run triple to tie Friday night's game and then scored the winning run, earned

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DOREN WELCH,

East Most Valuable Player
from False River Academy

the MVP award for the West.

"You never know what can happen," Welch said of earning the MVP honor on a team featuring many of the state's top softball players. "You never know what people see in you. I didn't think I did anything special this weekend."

Although the East couldn't make an eight-run inning stand up Friday night, the four-run second inning was more than enough on Saturday.

The West broke through for its lone run in the fourth inning after Barbe catcher Brooke David hit a one-out double. Courtesy runner Taylor Broussard of Delcambre stole third base and scored on an errant throw.

Holden shortstop Blake Ray helped get that run back for the East in the sixth inning, leading off with a bunt single and stealing second base. Ray moved to third on a groundout and then scored on a fielder's choice.

The speedster, who hit over .700 her senior season and is headed to Southeastern Louisiana in the fall, said she and her teammates were determined to make up for Friday night's loss.

"I take this as any other normal game," she said. "I'm never happy to lose. I always want to win. I think I can speak for all of the players here. We wanted to win."

Ray was one of six East players who picked up multiple hits over the weekend, with Welch and East Ascension catcher Tiffany Robinson leading the way with three hits apiece. Denham Springs outfielder Alexis

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BLAKE RAY,

East team member from Holden

Gremillion went 2-for-5 with a home run and three RBIs.

Hutchins finished 3-for-6 with a triple, three RBIs and two runs scored for the West, while Meche and New Iberia's Megan Thomas also had three hits apiece.

The Barbe duo of David and Shelbie Reed combined to go 6-for-10 with a double and three RBIs.

May 22, 2011 -The Town Talk – Alexandria, LA

LHSCA all-stars split doubleheader



PINEVILLE -- There was no shortage of offensive firepower at the Louisiana High School Coaches Association all-star softball doubleheader. The two squads combined for 29 hits and 17 runs as the West rallied to defeat the East 9-8 Friday night. The East rebounded for a 5-1 victory Saturday afternoon.

"I don't think our excitement level ever dropped," said Kix Hutchins of Airline, who went 3-for-5 and scored two runs Friday. "We just remained confident." Down by three runs in the bottom of the seventh, the West team's rally started with Courtney Ivey of Oak Hill reaching first base on a fielding error by East second baseman Tori Davis. With two outs, Kacie Franklin of St. Louis and Meagan Thomas of New Iberia reached safely with back-to-back infield singles off Chelsea Leblanc of East Ascension to load the bases. Hutchins tied the game with one swing as she blasted the ball in the gap for a bases-clearing triple. Next up was Mariel Meche of Rayne, the team's starting pitcher, who hit an infield dribbler and barely beat out the throw for the game-winning hit.

"I'm pretty confident I beat it out," Meche said. She gave up no runs on three hits in four innings of work. The West team took an early lead as Shelbie Reed of Barbe drove in Meagan Thomas of New Iberia with a single in the first inning. The West added to that lead by scoring two runs in the third inning. Brooke David of Barbe got on with a single and scored on a wild pitch. Reed reached first base on a bunt single and scored on a sacrifice fly by Courtney Townsend of Pine Prairie. Nicole Habetz of St. Thomas More replaced Meche in the fourth inning. Even though she gave up two hits, Habetz got out of the fourth unscathed but that would not be the case in the fifth.

After giving up a two-run single to Tiffany Robinson of East Ascension, Habetz made a costly mistake to Alexis Gremillion of Denham Springs. With two outs and a full count, Habetz threw a fastball that Gremillion blasted over the left field wall for a three-run home run. A few batters later, Pineville's Kayla Tullos drove in Malorie Zunbro of West Feliciana with a standup double. Tori Davis of West Ouachita then drove in Tullos with a double of her own and Davis scored after Victoria Huggins of Parkview Baptist laced a triple down the right field line. The East team would score eight runs, six of those with two outs, in the inning. The massive offensive output proved to not be enough as the West scored two runs in the bottom of the sixth and eventually the lead in the seventh.

Despite the defeat, Pineville's Tullos was happy to be part of the festivities. "It is kind of exciting," Tullos said. "It is an honor for me regardless if we win or lose." In Saturday's game, Doren Welch blasted a three-run homer in the fourth inning as the East pulled away to a 4-0 lead.

May 22, 2011 -The Town Talk – Alexandria, LA

ALL-STAR SOFTBALL

West wins with rally in seventh

BY BRET H. MCCORMICK

Special to The Advocate

PINEVILLE – A game that featured 29 hits and 17 runs came down to a game-winning infield single late Friday night.

The West scored four runs in the bottom of the seventh inning, including the game-winning RBI single by Rayne's Mariel Meche, which scored Airline's Kix Hutchins to lift the West to a 9-8 victory over the East in the first game of the 2011 Louisiana High School Coaches Association All-Star games at Coca-Cola Lady Wildcat Field on Louisiana College campus.

Game 2 is scheduled for at 1 p.m. Saturday.

Meche hit the ball up the middle, past East Ascension pitcher Chelsea LeBlanc, and was called safe at first base, beating out a throw from Pineville shortstop Kayla Tullos.

Hutchins had tied the game with a three-run triple to the fence in right-center field.

"I don't know what happened," said LeBlanc, who struck out seven in four innings of relief. "It just happened."

The East battled back from a three-run deficit to take the lead with an eight-run fifth inning.

East Ascension catcher Tiffany Robinson got the East on the board with a two-run single, and Denham Springs center fielder Alexis Gremillion followed with a three-run home run over the fence in left-center field to give the East its first lead.

"I was so excited," Gremillion said of her home run.

Tullos and Tori Davis of West Ouachita followed with RBI doubles, while Parkview Baptist first baseman Victoria Huggins drove Davis in with an RBI triple.

At that point, it appeared the East was in firm control, especially with LeBlanc in the circle, East assistant Danny Roberts of Ruston said.

LeBlanc, however, ran into some trouble in the sixth, giving up a two-run single to Barbe catcher Brooke David.

She sandwiched two strikeouts in the seventh inning around an infield error, but the West rallied to load the bases with singles by Kacie Franklin of St. Louis and Meagan Thomas of New Iberia. Hutchins then delivered a triple over a drawn-in outfield.

"We knew we had the bats, but they had the speed," Roberts said.

"The speed is what got us. They chipped away with their speed and got the big hit when they needed it."

Gremillion finished 2-for-4 with the homer and three RBIs, while Huggins was 2-for-2. LeBlanc, Live Oak's Brooke Ort, False River Academy's Doren Welch, Dutchtown's Jade Bourgeois and Holden's Blake Ray all singled in the game.

Roberts said his players weren't happy about the way the game ended, and they'll get a crack at revenge with the second game.

"We can't just score in one inning," Roberts said.

"We had our chances. We've just got to take advantage of them."

LeBlanc and Gremillion said that while they weren't happy with the way the game ended Friday night, they were excited to be playing in the all-star game.

"We're just playing for fun," LeBlanc said.

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Brooke David 2-4, 2 RBIs; Mariel Meche 2-3,

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Acadia Parish duo savors All-Star experience

PINEVILLE – For Rayne’s Mariel Meche and Notre Dame’s Taylor Simon, this past weekend’s participation in the High School Coaches Association All-Star softball doubleheader will be one the pair savors forever.

“It was a really good experience,” said Meche. “It was kind of a learning experience playing with and against people that I don’t know and just being comfortable with the players.”

Simon, who missed the first game of the doubleheader Friday due to graduation, also enjoyed her experience.

“This was a really good experience for me,” she said. “It was a lot of fun getting to meet new people. Everyone I talked to had signed with colleges and it kind of gave me a feeling of what it’s going to be like to play in college.”

Simon missed Friday’s contest, but Meche made the most of her opportunity in that game, playing a huge role in the West’s 9-8 victory.

The crafty pitcher worked the first three innings on the mound, holding the East’s potent lineup to no runs.

“When I was pitching, I was a lot more comfortable knowing that I had people behind me that had my back,” said Meche. “I knew I had people that I could count on and they knew what they were doing.

“I just trusted in my coach and his pitch calling and worked on hitting my spots.”

A scoring barrage ensued after Meche left the circle and the East took an 8-5 advantage heading into the bottom of the seventh.

St. Thomas More’s Nicole Habetz relieved Meche in the fourth inning and limited the East squad to no runs on two hits.

But Habetz wasn’t as fortunate in the fifth.

The East scored all eight of its runs in the frame to take the lead.

Denham Springs’ Alex Gremillion did most of the damage in the inning with her three-run home run while Pineville’s Kayla Tullos and West Ouachita ’s Tori Davis each had RBI doubles. East Ascension’s Tiffany Robinson also had an RBI single in the inning

that was capped by a run-scoring triple by Parkview's Victoria Huggins.

Six of the East's runs scored with two outs.

Meche returned to the mound in the sixth and held the East scoreless. In all, she gave up just three hits in four innings of work.

The West rallied in the seventh, scoring three runs on a bases-loaded triple by Airline's Kix Hutchins.

With the score tied and two outs, Meche stepped to the plate and delivered the game-winning blow, a dribbler past the mound that she just beat out.

"There was a little pressure but I didn't really stress about it," said Meche of her at-bat in the seventh. "I just went up there calm and focused on putting the ball in play."

On Saturday, the East bounced back to pull out a 5-1 victory over the West. Simon started the game at shortstop and played three innings before returning in the sixth to play the final two innings in left field.

"I was pretty comfortable at shortstop," said Simon. "Now moving to left field, I was a little nervous about that at first. But I've played softball all my life and I pay attention at practice to what each player on the field has to do and what their role is. So I kind of learned from that and it helped me out, knowing what to do."

Simon grounded out to third base in the second inning and reached base on a bunt single in the seventh but was left stranded at third base.

"The pitchers we faced didn't have a lot of velocity, but it was decent pitching that I'm probably going to face in college," said Simon. "I'm just glad I got to get in the batters box once or twice to see what it would be like."

Meche entered the game in the fourth frame. She played second base for one inning and then made another appearance in the circle in the sixth inning. She gave up no runs and one hit in the inning.

Both Meche and Simon will be attending LSU-Eunice in the fall where they will continue their softball careers with the newly crowned NJCAA Division II national champion Lady Bengals.

"When I found out they won, I was really excited," said Simon. "It makes me more excited to go play there next year." "I'm excited for the team and the program," said Meche. "And I'm glad I'm coming in next year. We just have to work that much harder because there are going to be some big shoes to fill."