

Blast Earns Splits In Season Finale

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The Watauga Blast closed out regular-season play by splitting a double-header Thursday night against South Greene at Happy Valley High School in Elizabethton, TN.

In game one, the Blast suffered a no-hitter and lost 6-0. Riley Pudney took the loss giving up the six runs, but only one was earned run on seven hits. She also had three strikeouts and walked one. Watauga had only two baserunners in the first game. Pudney drew a walk in the first inning, but was stranded at second after a stolen base; Kylie McCoury drew a walk in the fourth and was also stranded at second after a stolen base.

"We made solid contact the whole game and hit the ball hard, but we just hit it right at them," said Watauga coach Jerry Moretz. "That's how it goes sometimes, but I was proud of the resolve of the team. They battled much better tonight."

In the second game, The Blast defeated South Greene, 6-3. Kim Robinson set the tone in the bottom of the first inning as she blasted a 1-0 pitch over the left center-field fence for a 2-run homerun. The Blast would never seriously be challenged the rest of the game.

Watauga added a run in the second inning. Nicole Dollar lead things off with a double. She advanced to third on a sacrifice bunt by Hallie Leonard. Dollar would score on a passed ball to give the Blast a 3-0 lead.

"I really liked the way the team started the second game," Moretz said. "We came out and right away took control. It was nice to get Nicole, Allison, and Taylor (Drummonds), but out with us. It just seemed to add a little confidence to the team as a whole, but it took them a little time to get back in the swing of things."

In the 3rd inning, the Blast added to their lead. Taylor Drummonds led-off the inning with an infield single and promptly stole second base. Townsend laid down a perfect bunt and beat the throw for an infield single. Drummonds scored all the way from second base on the play. Riley Pudney drew a walk, and both runners advanced on a wild pitch. After a Robinson strike-out, Elizabeth Dollar laced a double to left field scoring two more runs for a 6-0 lead.

South Greene mounted a comeback in the fourth. Kim Robinson came on in relief gave up a walk and hit a batter that ignited a three-run rally. South Greene got their only two hits in the inning as well. But Robinson settled down and finished the game giving up three earned runs on two hits; she struck out four, but walked three.

The Blast end the season with a 4-6 record and now advance on to the tournament to defend their championship from last year. The tournament starts Tuesday and Watauga will play the winner of Happy Valley and South Greene with a start time of 7 pm.

"It was good to end the regular season on a good note" Moretz said. "We had a very young team this summer and they came a long way. The experience they got this summer is going to pay dividends for them. The teams we played this year really wanted to beat us because of what we accomplished last season. I like being the team everyone wants to beat. It's a huge compliment."

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"We still have a lot to work on, but these ladies are starting to come together. Hopefully, we can make a little run in the tournament. Regardless, it is a joy and privilege to coach these players."