

Robinson's No-hitter Propels Blast to Finals

Written by Staff Reports

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The Watauga Blast defeated South Greenville 4-1 in the semi-finals of the Happy Valley Summer League tournament Tuesday night.

The Blast got things started early and never looked back on the strength of a no-hitter thrown by rising junior Kim Robinson. Robinson also helped her own cause offensively as she led-off the game with a single to centerfield. The Blast (5-7) eventually loaded the bases thanks to a single by Hope LaPointe and a walk to Nicole Dollar.

But despite the huge threat, Watauga only plated one run in the inning. Robinson scored on an RBI single by Hallie Leonard.

Watauga added two more runs in the third. Dollar got it started with a single to right field and scored on a double by Riley Pudney. Pudney stole third and scored on an RBI single by Leonard that gave the Blast a 3-0 lead.

"We've been able to get baserunners all summer but just haven't been able to get the clutch hit to score runs," said Watauga coach Jerry Moretz. "Hallie really came through for us tonight." Robinson was in complete control. She had ten strikeouts, but she also gave up four walks and hit two batters. South Greene scored its only run in the fourth. A lead-off walk eventually came around to score spoiling Robinson's shutout bid.

"This was Kim's best pitching performance of the summer" Moretz said. "She had command of all her pitches and stayed focused the whole game. Nicole did a great job calling pitches and our defense was up to the task when they put the ball in play.

"When South got baserunners, they tried to run on us, but Nicole did a great job of throwing them out on those attempts. She has such a great feel for the game that it's like having a coach on the field. We have several players that know the game and give us (the coaches) great input. That's important because it gives them ownership of what is going on."

The Blast added an insurance run in the top of the fifth and it was Dollar once again getting things started. She led the inning off with a single and scored on a single by Kaitlin Stillwell.

"They played their most complete game of the season tonight," Moretz said. "We have so many younger players with us this summer that haven't experienced the competition we face over here and the few players we have from last year have really helped them out a lot. It is such great experience for them to play together and learn to compete as a team. It can do nothing but help them when they get to their high school season."

The Blast will play the winner of Greenville - Unaka on Thursday night at 6:30 in the championship game. If they win Thursday, it will be the second year in a row that they have won the tournament championship. Their most likely opponent is Greenville, who swept Watauga in the season series.

"The team is looking forward to the challenge Thursday," Moretz said. "They will be ready to play no matter who it is and hopefully we can continue tonight's solid play."

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Leading Hitters:

Nicole Dollar 2 for 2, Walk, 2 Runs scored
Hallie Leonard 2 for 2, 2 RBI
Kim Robinson 2 for 3, 1 run scored
Riley Pudney 1 for 3, Double, stolen base, 1 run scored
Kaitlin Stillwell 1 for 1, RBI
Rachel Hawkins 1 for 1, Double
Rachel Cox 1 for 3, Double

Pitching:

Robinson 5 IP 1R 1 ER 0 H 10 K 4 BB 2 HB