

## H-DNL teams do North Coast proud

Brad Botkin The Times-Standard  
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EUREKA -- For a baseball and softball season that got off to a slow start, no thanks to the weather, things wrapped up in pretty fine fashion.

Eight Humboldt-Del Norte League teams advanced to the North Coast Section playoffs, five went as far as the semifinals, and two went home with championships.

The latter would be the Hoopa softball team under head coach Ryan Ray and the McKinleyville baseball team.

And to make it all the more sweet, both hurdled their respective nemesis' along the way.

Hoopa supplanted Ferndale in the Little Four with a one-game playoff victory before defeating Urban for the title, while the Panthers demoted Arcata, the No. 1 seed and Big 5 champion, in a second-round matchup that may never be forgotten.

McKinleyville upended Healdsburg (the team many considered to be the class of the section) at Santa Rosa Junior College this past Saturday.

Now comes the hard part for head coach Dustin Dutra, who must see off 11 seniors who have given so much of themselves to him and his program.

"With the senior class it's always difficult to see them go, you get to know them on a personal level," said Dutra. "It's hard to put into words, but I will say that they were a group that didn't take themselves too seriously, they had a lot of fun. There is never a dull moment with them."

Dutra went on to compliment his team's selflessness, citing that they have been a cohesive unit that dates as far back as Little League.

So without further ado, congratulations to Tom Jaso, Bailey Mason, Bobby Williamson, Kendall Cole, Andrew Hanger, Shawn Johnston, Dusty McCullough, Tyler Hunt, Tim Moore, Louis Lonn and Brady Smith -- you guys went out on top, and nobody can ever take that away.

Hoopa is more fortunate in terms of returning a greater number of players from its championship team, but the three the Warriors will lose are of heavy significance.

Melia Jarnaghan, Kayla Carpenter and Karmen McCovey, all integral components, are moving on, and while Ray is aware they will be missed on the field, she is excited about their futures.

"Those are three key players," said Ray of her dynamic trio. "It's going to be hard to see them go, you get attached to them. (But) they are going to do great things (Ray boasted of the girls' academic achievements, saying they are all top-notch students). This was a nice way to end it."