

Del Norte wins first NCS title

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Del Norte capped a dominant season with a 3-2 victory over Sir Francis Drake in the North Coast Section Class 2A Redwood Empire Softball championship in Crescent City Saturday.

With the win, the Lady Warriors finished their season with a record of 23-2 while winning their first-ever NCS title.

However, the triumph was anything but easy and Sir Francis Drake had several opportunities to break the game open in the first two innings.

In the top of the first, the Lady Pirates pushed across a run when Del Norte first baseman Katie Rinkevicz couldn't handle a throw from teammate Michelle Stacey before pitcher Alyssa Bergquist ended the first-and-third threat with a big strikeout.

Then, in the top of the second, another run scored on a single to center, but Rinkevicz redeemed herself when she lunged to snare a liner for the third out with runners on first and third.

Del Norte would get all three of its runs in the bottom of the fourth, the first on a double by Lauryn Lesina that plated Jessica Morrow.

An error on a Bergquist pop-up pushed across Lesina and a wild pitch allowed pinch-runner Sarah Weiser to score the eventual game-winning run.

From there, Bergquist took over on the mound and kept the Sir Francis Drake offense at bay until the top of the seventh when a walk and two steals sandwiched between two strikeouts put the tying run on third.

But Bergquist didn't relent under the pressure and got the Lady Pirate batter to tap out weakly to Rinkevicz to end the game.

Five Lady Warriors had hits, with Stacey going 1-for-1, Lexie Nelson and Paula Rhodes each going 1-for-2 and Lesina and Morrow going 1-for-3.

Del Norte head coach Jackie Heuberger attributed the victory to her players not taking themselves too seriously out on the field in the midst of what most would consider to be an intense situation.

“We tried to have a good time,” Heuberger said. “And if they are having a good time, they’re going to play well.”

Heuberger added that she expects another complete team effort next year, with the entire squad expected to return thanks to a class that features no seniors.

“It was a long season battling injuries but we fought through it,” Heuberger said. “They all add something to the team and they’re going to come back and work harder.”

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