



MENDOCINO-LAKE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT NEWS RELEASE

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EAGLES BATTLE, BUT YUBA EDGES OUT TWO WINS

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On March 14 in Marysville, the Mendocino College Eagles softball team opened Bay Valley Conference play at Yuba College with sort of a hybrid doubleheader.

The first game of the doubleheader was not counted as a conference game, although it was obviously played between two conference teams, the Eagles and the Yuba College 49ers. It was counted as a pre-conference game. The second game of the doubleheader was each team's first conference game.

Things did not go so well for the Eagles that day. Each game ended in Yuba's favor on the 8-run rule. The Niners, as Yuba players like to call themselves, won the first game 13-5 in five innings and the second game, 15-6, also in 5 innings of play.

On Tuesday of this week, the two team had a rematch, this time playing a doubleheader at Mendocino College. This time, both games were counted as conference games.

The Eagles played much better in both these games than they had in the prior meeting of the two teams. But again it was Yuba coming away with two wins, albeit this time by slim 2-run margins in both 7-inning games.

The first game was tied twice, first 3-3 in first inning and then 10-10 in the fourth. Yuba got a run in the fifth and then another in the seventh. The Eagles got the tying runs on base in the seventh, with the winning run at the plate with one out, but the rally stalled, with Yuba hanging on for a 12-10 win.

The Eagles got an early-game lead in game two, going up 2-0 after two innings of play. Yuba took the lead with a 5-run top of the third, only to have the Eagles reclaim the lead with a 4-spot in the bottom of the inning.

Mendocino held the lead for another inning, but Yuba scored 4 runs in the top of fifth. The Eagles answered with a run in the bottom of the inning, with Yuba's lead cut to 9-7.

Yuba added a run in the sixth, but the Eagles answered with two in the bottom of the inning to make it a one-run game. Yuba got an insurance run in the top of the seventh to go up 11-9 and kept the Eagles from rallying in their final at bats, with the Niners winning 11-9 to sweep the double header.

As the scores of the two games might indicate, there were lots of runners for both sides in both games and lots scoring, making for some long innings, with each game reaching the 2-hour mark.



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The games featured several highlights and big plays by both teams.

In the first inning of game one, the Eagles came out swinging, getting 5 hits in the bottom of the first. A leadoff single by freshman center fielder Hannah Norwood got things going. Freshman first baseman Mykala Ramsey tripled to left center. Freshman catcher Hannah Flynn looped a single to center. Sophomore third baseman Brianna Johnson doubled to right center and freshman second baseman Emily Psalmonds grounded a single to right.

In the second inning, Yuba batted around, with three batters getting two at bats in the inning. Yuba had 5 hits and two walks and scored 6 runs, the big blow was a 3-run home run by Magdalena Gonzalez over the left field fence.

In the bottom of the inning, Norwood singled, Ramsey doubled to left center and sophomore shortstop Aliza Atkins tripled to right center.

Trailing 10-5 in the fourth, freshman Morgan Profitt, who had moved from right field to pitcher in the third, had a great leadoff at bat to start the Eagles' rally. She fell behind 0-2 but managed to draw a walk.

Next up, Norwood laid down a bunt. As is almost the case with her blazing speed, she would have beaten it out for a hit. But the throw to first was wide and down into the right field corner. Norwood was able to come all the way around to score behind Profitt.

With one out, Atkins singled, stole second and then third and scored when the Yuba center fielder dropped a long fly ball. Johnson doubled in the fourth run of the inning. Sophomore left fielder Britlynn Rodriguez doubled down the right field line for run No. 5 to tie the game 10-10.

The Eagles had momentum and looked like they might take a lead. But Yuba, like the Eagles had done earlier in the game, switched pitches, with Kaylie Wofford going to the circle. She held the Eagles to just a walk in the fifth and sixth.

In the bottom of the seventh, Norwood, who had an all-around superb day in the in the field and at the plate, made a fine backhanded catch of a line drive near the fence in right center by the leadoff batter. That helped to limit Yuba's scoring to just one run. Profitt stranded a runner at third by getting a strikeout for the final out.

The Eagles got two runners on with one out in the bottom of the seventh, but a base running error resulted in the second out prior to a single by Ramsey. A fly ball to center ended the game.

In game two, the Eagles scored a run in the first after two were out and no one on. Atkins double to left center and Flynn singled her home.

In the second inning Rodriguez got a one-out triple to right and later scored on a wild pitch. An error gave the Eagles another runner, but she was thrown out on the bases on a Norwood double. The Eagles led 2-0 after two innings of play.



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The biggest hit of the doubleheader occurred in the top of the third when Yuba's Dustyne Steel hit a grand slam after Yuba had scored one run, giving Yuba a 5-2 lead.

The Eagles rallied back immediately in the bottom of the inning. Ramsey got a leadoff double. Atkins tripled off the center fielder's glove near the fence. Flynn singled to left to drive in a run. Johnson got grazed by a pitch. Psalmonds sacrificed the runners to second and third. Rodriguez drove in the third run of the inning with a single to right to give the Eagles a 6-5 lead.

In a scoreless fourth inning for both teams, Norwood was robbed of a hit by a diving catch by the Yuba centerfielder.

Yuba's Steele, led off the fifth with her second home run of the game. Yuba added two more runs in the inning to go up 9-6.

In the bottom of the inning, Flynn got a leadoff double over the right fielder's head. Johnson doubled her home to make the score 9-7.

The Eagles were robbed of another run when the Yuba second baseman made an over-the-shoulder catch on the outfield grass in the web of her glove with her back to the infield, taking away a would-be hit by Rodriguez.

Yuba got runners on second and third with no outs in the 6th, but a fine catch in right by Profitt of a low liner helped limit the damage to just one run.

Down 10-7, the Eagles rallied for two runs, starting with one-out triple by Norwood, she then scored on an error on a ground ball. Later in the inning, Flynn got a two-out single to drive in a run.

Yuba threatened to have a big inning in the top of the seventh, loading the bases with one out and scoring a run on a walk. But the Eagles got a force at the plate on a grounder to Akins at short and then a force at second on another grounder to short to limit the damage to just the one run.

Yuba's Brandy Gilliam who had taken over the Niners' pitching chores a couple innings earlier, got two quick outs in the bottom of the seventh on a fly ball and then a dribbler fielded by the catcher and thrown to first for out number two.

Freshman Alexis Johnson kept the Eagles' hopes alive by getting an infield hit. But the next batter grounded to second to end the game.

In a games with lots of offense, the Eagles certainly had their share. Norwood had 5 hits, including a double and triple, plus two walks. Flynn had 5 hits, including a double. Ramsey had 4 hits, including 2 doubles and a triple. Akins had four hits, including 2 triples and a double. Rodriguez had 3 hits, including a triple. Brianna Johnson had 2 doubles. Psalmonds, Alexis Johnson and Jerri Chavira each had hits.

Despite having just the two wins so far is season to show for their efforts, the Eagles (now 2-3 in conference play



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and 2-13 overall) continue to play hard with enthusiasm and spirit and seem to enjoy the playing the games despite the losses.

Eagles head coach Kelvin Chapman noted the team “has some really good players. We really do. We’re kind of young and inconsistent. The girls aren’t dropping their heads. They’re still competing and getting their hits. They come to practice and don’t point fingers. They’re a good group.”

The Eagles were scheduled to play at home on Thursday, hosting the Contra Costa Comets. With rain expected for that day and into the weekend. Those games were doubtful. But the games were cancelled for another reason.

As part of an ongoing problem that has plagued Bay Valley Conference women’s sports all year, with multiple colleges not fielding teams or playing with short rosters in various sports, Contra Costa announced that it would not field a team for the remainder of this season.

The team had played no pre-conference games and was 0-4 in its first two conference games, losing by wide margins. It forfeited its games with Los Medanos on Tuesday and will forfeit all remaining games on its schedule, including three doubleheaders with Mendocino.

With the conference now down to just three teams, that will leave the Eagles with just three more game dates on their 2017 schedule and just one more home date.

Next Tuesday, April 11, they will play a doubleheader at Los Medanos. The following Tuesday, April 18, the Eagles will play a doubleheader at Yuba.

The Eagles’ final games of the season will be played on Thursday, April 20, at home, vs. Los Medanos. Being their last home games, per tradition, a Sophomore Day Ceremony will be held between the games of the doubleheader, honoring the team’s three sophomores, Akins, Brianna Johnson and Rodriguez.