

So Pas High Girls Varsity Softball Wins First League Game in Years

southpasadenareview.com/so-pas-high-girls-varsity-softball-wins-first-league-game-in-years

Steve Whitmore

May 10, 2019

Sports

By

Steve Whitmore



Under new head coach, Mathew “Charlie” Jones, the So Pas High School girls varsity softball team broke at least a two-year league winless streak when the squad fought back against Monrovia and won. Photo by courtesy Mathew Jones

A long drought is over. The tide may be turning. It wasn't easy. They had to come from behind to do it.

The South Pasadena High School girls varsity softball team recently won its first league game since at least 2017 and it looks like it's going to be the first of many to come.

"I've heard of the difference in attitude as well from opposing coaches, umpires, parents and administration also," said first-year coach Mathew "Charlie" Jones in an email to The Review. "We will try to do some summer/fall ball practices and games to keep the momentum going and get the girls more experience. We have a lot of sophomores and freshman we expect to return next year so we could possibly have a good run."

The beleaguered program had been struggling season after season after season until this year when a new infusion of talent, energy, commitment and excitement took over.

One of the biggest changes was the addition of Jones as the new head coach. His philosophy is rooted, in large measure, in Ralph Waldo Emerson's world view.

"We believe, as coaches, in the idea that you must aim above the mark to hit the mark – Ralph Waldo Emerson – and that is what we did," Jones said. "We raised the bar as to what the program was about and what it could accomplish and the ladies stepped up. The assistant coaches, the parents, the administration, the little league and the community at large are all big contributors for sure. I can't wait to see how things grow with everyone involved."

The victory on April 12 against Monrovia deserves repeating. The game didn't start well for the Tigers and it looked like it was going to be the second loss of the season to Wildcats.

"The win we had against Monrovia happened because of a culmination of things throughout the season," Jones said. "We had four non-league wins previously and the game versus San Marino High before Monrovia was one of our most competitive games of the year. While there were some close games throughout – vs Glendale lost 4-3 in the 8th, Monrovia on 3/1 lost 6-5 because of two late game errors – that San Marino game was, I think, the turn-around point mentally for the team as San Marino is their rival school."

The Wildcats jumped out to an early lead when they singled twice, hit a double and put two runners on base by way of walks. The Tigers' pitcher, Cameryn Pearson, calmed down in the second, getting two quick outs before giving up another walk and a double. After two innings, the score was Wildcats 3, Tigers 0. In the fourth inning, the Tigers finally scored a run on consecutive walks. Score 3-1.

"Monrovia answered back in the bottom of the 4th with a triple and the next batter got on via an error by our shortstop which scored the runs," Jones recounted. "This made it 4-1 going into the 5th inning."

The away game was being played at Monrovia high School, meaning the Wildcats get the last at-bats.

Moreover, varsity girls softball play seven innings and it was in the seventh inning when the Tigers finally came alive. The score was 4-1 when the Tigers came up to the plate in the top of the seventh. Their last chance to make something happen.

Coach Jones explained what happened next: “In the top of the 7th, one of (our) JV players, Karly Roberts, led off the inning with a single. On a side note, we brought all of JV up halfway through the season due to various injuries and to give them varsity experience for next year. Our next batter walked giving us runners at 1st and 2nd. Carissa Park then stepped into the box and hit a single to load the bases with no outs and our power hitter Katelyn Wooton stepping in. Wooton hit a 2-RBI double ... making the score 4-3 with no outs. Kate Buckley then stepped up and promptly hit another double scoring two more runs making it 5-4 with no outs. Stella Benton came up and struck out swinging and then Kat Castro stepped in and grounded out to second base but moved the runner to third. Jewel Nguyen entered the box and added our 6th run – our 5th run that inning – singling to right scoring Kate Buckley.”

Jones said the bottom of the seventh looked it might get away from the Tigers because Monrovia struck a single with one out to put a runner on. However, relief pitcher Stella Benton struck out the next batter. And the next batter hit a grounder back to Benton who threw to first.

“Her throw, however, did pull Karly Roberts off the first base bag but she came down with a tag on the runner to win the game,” Jones said.

Pastor Sam Park, Carissa’s father, said the win is “definitely a turning point for the program.”

“I was so exciting to watch them come from behind to win,” Park said during a brief interview in a local coffee shop after the game. “They hadn’t won a league game in years. This win is important, special. It can turn the program around. They hadn’t won in years.”

Jones summed up the season and the single league victory, acknowledging that it was just one win.

“This was an overall great season for the program even though they went 5-15 overall, 1-11 in league,” he said. “Parents and administration as well as umpires and opposing coaches always stated how the girls were much more competitive this year than in years past. We will lose four seniors this year – Katelyn Wooton, Justene Fernandex, Jacqui Dominguez and Jillian Godinez. Wooton and Godinez will be continuing their softball careers at Pasadena City College. (But) add in the local little leagues success and we can only hope we get a good influx of talented players that should be attending South Pasadena High School.”

In other news, the team announced the all-league selections. They are 2nd Team All-League Catcher, Katelyn Wooton; 2nd-Team All-League Infielder, Carissa Park; 2nd Team All-League Outfielder Kate Buckley.

