

Softball: Winters Pitches Holy Names Past Spartans for Metro Title

• By ANNETTE GRIFFUS

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The Bainbridge Spartans fastpitch team has run roughshod over the majority of their opponents in the Metro League this season.

They used dominating pitching, timely hitting and a strong defense to win their first 19 games of the season.

But the team the Spartans faced on Friday in the Metro championship game could have been a mirror image of themselves — with one difference.

Holy Names has experience in big-time games.

And it paid off as the Cougars (19-4) handed young Bainbridge (21-2) a 5-2 loss to defend their Metro title in a game at Lower Woodland Park.

Holy Names handed Bainbridge its first loss, 5-3, on the final day of the regular season. The Spartans won the earlier meeting, 14-2.

Junior pitcher Farleigh Winters held the potent Spartans to five hits on Friday. She struck out eight and walked three.

"Our pitcher (Winters) was the key," said Holy Names coach Jerry Millsap. "She had everything working for her."

The Spartans go to next week's Class 3A Sea-King District 2 tournament at Marymoor Park in Renton as the Metro's No. 2 seed. Bainbridge will play at 2 p.m. on Thursday against a yet-to-be-determined opponent.

The Spartans need to win one game in the double-elimination tournament to earn their second straight trip to state.

"A game like this is going to teach us something," said Bainbridge coach Liz McCloskey. "It's going to teach us lessons we need to learn now so that next week when we go to districts we're not making the same mistakes."

Those mistakes include nine errors in their last two games, including three against Holy Names. Through their previous 20 games, the Spartans had committed less than 10 errors.

"I think it's the nerves as much as I hate to say it," McCloskey said. "These kids are young. It's the big game. It's the 'Everybody is watching you. Nobody else is playing, it's just us.'

"That's the one thing we've got to learn. That's going to happen because these kids are good and this team is good."

Bainbridge got to Winters in the bottom of the third inning on back-to-back RBI singles by Haylee Baker and Cara Thompson for a 2-0 lead. But the Cougars tied the game the next inning on a two-out, two-run double to left field by Keilan Sweeney.

Holy Names would add another run in the fifth and RBI singles by Emily Nordhoff and Natalie Gellos ended the scoring in the seventh. Three of the Cougars runs were unearned as Bainbridge's defense struggled behind starting pitcher Lindsey Willmann.

Willmann gave up nine hits, struck out nine and walked one.

"Losing this game wasn't a good thing, but it wasn't a bad thing," Willmann said. "Because it teaches us we're not going to win every game. There's always something to keep motivating us."

Holy Names' Millsap said nobody is writing Bainbridge off.

"Bainbridge is a great team," Millsap said. "Everyone is scared of Bainbridge, I'm telling you that. They're

not done. They're going to have an impact in districts and in the state (tournament) because they're a good team."

Holy Names 5, Bainbridge 2

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[Farleigh Winters](#) and Natalie Gellos. Lindsey Willmann and Brittany Wisner. W—[Winters](#). L—Willmann.

Leading hitters—HN: Sara Arnone 2-4 (R), Emily Nordhoff 2-3 (RBI,R), Natalie Gellos 1-3 (RBI), Keilan Sweeney 1-3 (2RBI). **Bain:** Haylee Baker 1-4 (RBI), Cara Thompson 1-2 (RBI), Lauren Reichert 1-1.