

SoCal Alliance v. Dynasty 6

by Del Pickney

I coach the SoCal Alliance men's slow pitch police softball team. I have been fortunate to have enjoyed some success with my team as they are frequently a top contender and have won two PoliceSoftball.com World Series titles. Recently I was challenged to a game by the Dynasty 6 professional fast pitch team. This was a team made up of some very notable female athletes such as Angela Tincher who in 2008 no-hit Team USA and Megan Langenfeld, who recently was named MVP of the 2010 College World Series. Not only did the accomplishments of these athletes impress me, we were going to be playing this team in a fast pitch game which is something fairly foreign to my team of 30-40 something year old police officers. Visions of the Harlem Globetrotters vs. the Washington Generals quickly flashed in my head with my team playing the role of the Generals. The fact Dynasty 6 confidently decided to only use six players on defense added significantly to my fears of an embarrassing beat down. Not only were we going to get smashed by a girls team, we were going to get smashed by only six of them.

I was told Dynasty 6 would provide a female player to pitch for us and my naturally suspicious police nature quickly kicked into high gear as I suspected we would be given a girl who is not very good or would be a double agent and serve up cookies at opportune times to the Globetrotters, er, Dynasty 6 team.

I was then introduced to our pitcher Kristen Struett who was a local 17 year old girl who would be soon pitching her senior season for Marina High School in Huntington Beach, California. My first thought was this young girl was going to be eaten alive on the mound. Kristen told me just an hour ago she received a surprise call telling her to come to the fields because she was needed to pitch. Kristin did not know who she was going to pitch against but got excited when she saw the Dynasty 6 team. Kristin was very happy just meeting the amazing players of the Dynasty 6 team and then she found out she was pitching



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AGAINST them.

Now it was game time and the battle of the sexes, as I saw it, was about to begin. What quickly became apparent was the game was not about our team, our male egos or overcoming the difficulties of hitting a rise ball off of Angela Tincher or a screwball off of Megan Langenfeld. The game quickly became about watching Kristen take the ball and pitch against women she had looked up to and has watched on television in the College World Series. In essence this young high school girl was now pitching against her heroes of the softball world.

Before the game started, Kristen looked every bit the 17 year old girl she was. As the game went on and Kristen kept pitching, I saw her transform before my eyes. What was once

a young girl that was just happy to be on the field with the stars of her sport, had now turned into a young woman believing she could not only play with them, but win the game. Soon my entire team started seeing what I was seeing and we all wanted to win more for Kristen than we did for any male ego we had. The team seemed to adopt Kristen for six innings and we all now saw our daughters in her. Seeing her rise to the occasion and battle these accomplished veteran players made us all very proud.

In the end, Kristen pitched my Alliance team to an 8-2 victory but that wasn't as important to us as it was just six innings prior. What was now important to us was how we now viewed the young women on Dynasty 6. We gained a huge amount of respect for the women who play this game and we see them as the elite athletes they are. We also met and were extremely impressed by one young athlete who made a statement that she can not only compete with her heroes, but she can do so in spite of having a bunch of middle aged police officers as her teammates.

Now that is impressive!