

Back to the Super! Ohlone moves forward

By **JEFF WEISINGER**
Editor-in-chief

For a team that entered the playoffs riding a nine-game win streak, the Renegades made the Regional round against the 14th seed Modesto Pirates feel this past weekend like the College World Series.

The first two games saw two shutouts and two complete games while the third game saw a classic shootout with the Renegades coming out on top 8-7 to advance to this weekend's Super Regional matchup Friday afternoon against the Merced Blue Devils.

Coast Conference Pitcher of the Year Roberto Padilla led the Renegades to a 9-0 win in Friday's playoff opener. The lefty hurled his first postseason complete game, allowing just two hits with five strikeouts.

"I just stayed ahead in the count and was able to go to my go-to pitches in the count," Padilla said after Friday's game-one win.

"He established himself today as one of the elite pitchers in Northern California," said Ohlone Head Coach Jordon Twohig. "He established himself in the first two innings."

Padilla's gem on the mound was backed up by some early run support as sophomore shortstop

Michael Ussery opened the scoring in the second with a two-RBI double down the right field line scoring Kyle Holmstrom and Tanner Laran.

"It's huge to have our sophomore shortstop to drive in runs from that seven-spot in the lineup," Twohig said.

Ryan Walterhouse capped the three-run, second inning with an RBI single to left field, bringing home Ussery from third.

"I like playing with a few runs," Padilla added. "It puts less pressure on me. But having runs while you're out there is big."

The Renegades took full control of Pirates right-hander Vince Roberts in the fifth inning, going up 6-0 off Jeff Johnson's towering three-run homer to left. They would strike for three more in the sixth inning off Cody Foster's RBI double to left and Zach Johnson's two-RBI single off reliever Nick McCann to solidify their 9-0 win.

"It was a big win," Padilla said. "I think it sets the tone."

However the Pirates stormed back in game two, holding the Renegade lineup to just five hits and rocking right-hander Justin Kuks for five runs after just 4 1/3 innings in Modesto's 6-0 win to tie the series at 1-1.



Photo by Jeff Weisinger

Renegade righty Matt Fontaine pitched well though 6 1/3 innings in a no-decision in Ohlone's game-three win over Modesto.

Home runs by Modesto's Austin Keaton and Blake Usiak highlighted the game two rally by the Pirates, and Pirates ace Terrance Marin went the distance, allowing just the five hits while striking out 10.

And then came game three.

Riding the momentum from the second game just an hour before, the Pirates took the first shot against Ohlone and game three starter Matt Fontaine, striking for two runs in the game's opening frame off Blake Barber's two-run home run.

The Renegades would answer back with a run of their own in the bottom of the first off a Zach

Johnson sacrifice fly, scoring Steven Ramos, cutting the Pirates lead to 2-1, and would tie the game at two in the fourth inning off Kyle Holmstrom's sacrifice fly. Ohlone would eventually take a go-ahead 4-2 lead in the sixth off Michael Di Rocco's RBI-double and Walterhouse's RBI sacrifice bunt.

The Renegades' rally wouldn't last long though after Michael Cerda put the Pirates up 5-4 off a three-run homer off Fontaine with one out in the seventh.

Freshman reliever Mark Mercer struggled to get out of the seventh as well, and Geroge Asmus allowed Eddie McGrath to score on a passed ball to put Modesto up

6-4. Modesto tagged Asmus in the eighth to go up 7-4.

But in the bottom of the eighth, a two-RBI triple by Ussery sparked a four-run Renegade rally. Walterhouse scored Ussery from third to tie the game at seven, and Foster's sacrifice fly gave Ohlone the go-ahead 8-7 lead.

Padilla shut the door on Modesto in the ninth to preserve the win, getting Barber to groundout to third for the final out.

Ohlone will now face the Merced Blue Devils in Friday's Super Regional matchup at Ohlone at 3 p.m. The winner of that game will play the winner of Chabot/Diablo Valley on Saturday.

Four Renegades moving to the next level

By **KEVIN YIN**
Staff writer

Reggie Jones, Scott Clark, Quaran Johnson and Jamaal Blalock will be taking their talents to the next level.

Those four players from Ohlone's men's basketball team have signed letters of intent to attend four-year colleges next year. Jones will be attending Stanislaus State University, Clark is going to Humboldt State University, Johnson to Metro State University and Blalock is headed to Virginia Union University.

Jones was the state's Co-Player of the

Year this past season. He averaged 14.5 points per game, 5.1 rebounds per game, 1.8 blocks per game, 1.0 steals per game and shot 61.6 percent from the field. He led Ohlone in scoring, blocks and field goal percentage this year.

"Reggie was the Northern California player of the year. Had he been eligible to go to Division I, he would have probably been a mid to high major. He just doesn't have any Division I eligibility left," Ohlone Head Coach John Peterson said. "They're getting a very good player."

Clark was named to the All-Coast Conference first team for the 2009-'10 season. He

averaged 10.6 points per game, 4.2 rebounds per game, 2.6 assists per game and shot 32.2 percent from behind the three-point line.

Johnson received an honorable mention on the All-Coast Conference team while averaging 6.0 points per game and a team high 3.9 assists per game. Johnson shot 53.8 percent from the field and 38.6 percent from beyond the arc.

In addition to those four players, Peterson said he expects that four more Ohlone players will sign on to play for four-year schools, but have yet to decide where they are headed. According to Peterson, over the last 10 years, Ohlone has helped more than 60 players get

to the four-year level, including 10 players last year alone.

Peterson said that Ohlone's ability to consistently help players reach the next level has helped the school attract talented players.

"I think it's the goal of every junior college player to go to a four-year school and play," said Peterson. "We spend an inordinate amount of time marketing our guys. I think when people take a look at our program and they see that our guys are moving on and getting scholarships, and that's what they want to do, it makes us a little more attractive."

Runyon's girls enjoy an accomplished year

By **NICK ZAMBRANO**
Sports editor

It was a great season for Ohlone Softball Head Coach Donna Runyon. Aside from the gut-wrenching loss to Feather River nearly two weeks ago, she has plenty of positives to look back upon.

For instance, the Lady Renegades dominated the Coast Conference - North Division with their 14-2 record. They finished with an overall record of 27-11-1. Ohlone also won their eighth consecutive conference title. The last time the Lady Renegades failed to come away with a conference title was 2002.

The pressure to perform this season was nothing short of mammoth. The 2009 squad set the bar high as they went 39-10 (16-1 in conference play) and made it to the state

finals. The Ohlone team from '09 also boasted pitcher Kelly Colker, a two-time Conference Pitcher of the Year. Colker finished her career in Fremont collecting an imposing record of 51-13.

A staple in Ohlone's game plan under Runyon has always been solid pitching. Since 2006, an Ohlone pitcher has won the Conference Pitcher of the Year award four times. So replacing someone of Colker's stature was going to be detrimental to following up the '09 campaign.

Enter Jessica Varady.

The freshman from Livermore High came to Ohlone after helping her team to a North Coast Section Division I title. Runyon had hoped of Varady would create a formidable 1-2 punch on the mound with sophomore Kendall Beermann. However, with Beermann still

lingering from an shoulder injury, Runyon was forced to rely heavily on the highly-touted Varady.

"Yeah, I felt a lot of pressure," Varady said. "It was just like 'okay, now I have to do this. I have to do her job as well as my job and just try to pick myself up and try to do the best that I could.'"

Her response to the call was nothing short of staggering.

Varady finished the season with a personal record of 25-6 and displayed some equally impressive numbers as well. On top of leading the conference in innings pitched (194) and complete games (26), Varady blew away hitters for 141 strikeouts. The second pitcher behind her only had 76 K's to her name.

With those numbers she easily earned the 2010 Conference Pitcher of the Year as well as a spot on

the All-Conference and All-State teams.

At the dish, Ohlone drastically improved their numbers. They managed to lead the league in most major categories including batting average and runs batted in. Among the top 10 hitters in the league, four of them belong to the Lady Renegades. Varady found herself leading the conference with her .442 average.

Fellow freshman Stefanie Hatley, Paulina Gentry and Ashley Nahale were the other three in the top 10.

Another difficult task Runyon will have to face is replacing the eight sophomores that anchored the squad. Nahale is awaiting word on a possible scholarship from the University of Hawaii while Gentry and Shelby Tomasello are most likely to hang up their spikes when they

move on to Sacramento State.

However, Runyon played her cards right and had a perfect balance of freshmen and sophomores on the team. Varady and Hatley will provide her with a solid punch in the middle of lineup, along with their proven leadership. Other notables returning next season will be Megan Ramirez and Candace Christiansen.

There will still be numerous gaps to fill, but Runyon is already on top of her game. She has already gotten eight recruits to commit to Ohlone.

The recruit most notable would be Castro Valley High pitcher Lauren Ermitano. Ermitano (12-4) could help Varady with some protection in the rotation and possibly form another duo that could get Ohlone back to the promised land.