Lady Renegades return to postseason

Ohlone faces Gavilan College in first round of state playoffs

LOUIS LAVENTURE  
Editor-in-chief

The Ohlone College softball ball team is back for the playoffs.

Well, they never really went anywhere, but the Lady Renegades will make their return to the postseason after missing the state playoffs last year.

“This really means a lot to me after we didn’t make it last year,” sophomore catcher Sara Tagliaboschi said.

Especially since this is my final season here at Ohlone, it just means more.

Coach Donna Runyon has become accustomed to the playoffs and success during her time here at Ohlone, but this time has a different feel for Runyon.

“We are usually in the top eight seeds, so being seeded 12th and going away is a little different,” Runyon said.

Ohlone finds itself facing a familiar foe in the form of Gavilan College, which finished the regular season with a 28-10 overall record and a 13-4 conference record.

The Lady Renegades (26-12 overall, 13-5 conference) lost their first meeting this season with the Rams on March 11 in Fremont by a final of 8-1.

The two teams met again at the Ohlone College March Madness Tournament at Central Park just four days later on March 15.

Ohlone managed to shut down Gavilan the second time around, securing a 5-1 victory over the Rams.

“The two games we played against them give me confidence going into the playoffs,” freshman RaeAnn Garza said.

“The first time we played was one of our worst games. We figured out our mistakes and really dominated in the second game.”

Garza was magnificent in the victory, going the distance for Ohlone and only allowing one run on six hits while striking out six.

Savanna Ulloa drove in two runs and Gabriela Reyes collected an RBI of her own while accumulating two hits.

It was a far cry from the 8-1 loss to the Rams, in which Garza gave up 13 hits and six earned runs.

“We were way more mentally prepared the second time around,” Garza said.

“I just have to be smarter with my pitches and use the scouting report we have on them.”

The first-round matchup is a best-of-three-games series set for 2 p.m. Saturday and noon Sunday, and again at 2 p.m. Sunday if necessary.

All games will be played at Gavilan College’s home field in Gilroy.

The mismatch in seeding is not lost on Ohlone or freshman catcher Sara Tagliaboschi.

“You hear a 12 against a five seed and you automatically think blowout,” Tagliaboschi said.

“We just have to go in strong and focus on putting our best on the field.”

The winner of this series will take on the winner of the series between the fourth-seeded Sacramento City College and 13th-seeded Reedley College.

Top: Celina Mendoza dives back to second base while Shelby Hodges gets back to first during a 12-2 victory over Chabot College in Fremont in February. Middle: Coach Donna Runyon talks strategy with RaeAnn Garza, left, and Alyssa Raguini at Central Park in Fremont during the March Madness Tournament. Bottom: Sophomore Gabriela Reyes slides around the catcher in a 12-2 drubbing of Chabot College in Fremont in February.