

CIF-SS DIVISION 3 SOFTBALL

Capo Valley leaves Cypress behind

By Michael Huntley
Correspondent

MISSION VIEJO » Capistrano Valley continued its historic season by beating Cypress 4-2 Thursday in the quarterfinals of the CIF-SS Division 3 playoffs at Capistrano Valley High.

The Cougars will host Kennedy in the semifinals Saturday.

Capo Valley (23-6) has its most wins in a season since 2006. The Cougars have never won a CIF championship in softball and have not played in a CIF championship game since 1979.

“I told them at the beginning what my goals were — a league championship and a CIF championship,” Cougars coach Melissa Roth said. “We fell a little short in league but we are competing with the best teams. I think making a CIF championship game would be a big step toward building a competitive program here.”

Madi McDonnell was a big contributor for the Cougars offensively and in the circle. The junior threw a complete game, allowed two runs on two hits with three strikeouts.

McDonnell also went 2 for 3 at the plate with two doubles, including a go-ahead RBI double in the third inning.

“She’s really picked up her pitching load the second half of the season and she’s been hitting lights out for over a month now,” Roth said of McDonnell. “She’s been a big reason why we’ve been so successful.”

Said McDonnell: “I felt really good, my defense was really helping me today. I waited for my pitch



PHOTO BY PAUL RODRIGUEZ

Madi McDonnell threw a complete game and had two doubles, including the go-ahead hit, in Capistrano Valley’s 4-2 Division 3 quarterfinal win over Cypress.

and went for it. I really wanted to help get the lead so I can pitch with ease a bit.”

The Cougars struck first, in the first inning with a sacrifice fly by Kate Verhoef to get a 1-0 lead.

Cypress (21-4-1) took the lead in the second inning after a single by Naya Taylor and a two-run home run by freshman Sadie Sievers.

Capo Valley responded with a solo home run from Siena Stickney to tie the score 2-2 in the second inning.

“That was a huge, clutch at-bat from her,” Roth said of Stickney’s home run. “That was a momentum

shift and having a senior come up in a big moment, that’s what we want. It really lifted the energy in the dugout.”

The Cougars took the lead for good in the third inning on the double by McDonnell and another sacrifice fly by Verhoef to give Capo Valley a 4-2 lead.

Cypress was the the champion this season in an Empire League that featured Pacifica, which is playing in the Division 1 championship game.

The Centurions beat Capo Valley’s semifinal opponent Kennedy three times this season.

CIF-SS DIVISION 1 SOFTBALL

Pacifica stays hot, gets past Oaks Christian

By Dan Albano
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GARDEN GROVE » Pacifica’s softball team never hid its goal of reaching the CIF-SS semifinals. On Thursday, the Mariners showed how much they wanted to be in the finals, too.

Center fielder Kayli Counts and first baseman Annika Sogsti each belted home runs and Brynne Nally hung tough in the circle as Pacifica defeated Oaks Christian 6-3 in a Division 1 semifinal game at Pacifica High.

The Mariners (22-8), who lost in the quarterfinals the past two seasons, advanced to their first section final since winning Division 1 in 2014 under Mark Campbell. The seven-time section champion will face six-time champion and No. 1 seed Norco in the finals May 19 or 20 at Deanna Manning Stadium in Irvine.

“It’s pretty surreal,” Sogsti said. “I’m kind of still in shock but I’m proud to represent all these people right here on (our outfield) banners. I play for my teammates and my teammates play for me. All of our hard work has really paid off.”

Norco defeated Murrieta Mesa 8-1 in the other semifinal Thursday.

Oaks Christian (28-2-1), the reigning SoCal Division I Regional champion, brought the tying run to the plate with one out in the seventh inning with slugger Anahi Arreola. The senior launched her 19th home run in the fifth to trim the Mariners’ lead to 4-3. But with runners at the corners, Nally forced a chopper to second baseman Alysa Del Val, who turned the 4-6-3, game-ending double play with

shortstop Kaniya Bragg to secure the victory.

“My defense has had my back this whole entire game, this whole entire season,” Nally said of a group anchored by the UCLA-committed Bragg.

Nally, a Long Beach State commit, worked out of a first-and-third jam with one in the fourth by recording two of her eight strikeouts. She scattered seven hits.

Pacifica’s offense capitalized with runners aboard. Counts, who had the go-ahead hit against Los Alamitos in the quarterfinals, gave the Mariners the lead for good with a three-run home run to center in the third. The drive, with two outs, made the score 4-2. Sogsti added a two-run shot to right with one out in the fifth.

“That’s been our postseason,” fourth-year Pacifica coach Tony Arduino said. “We’ve come up with timely hits and that’s something we didn’t do throughout the season at (times).”

Oak Christian, inspired by their late coach Pete Ackermann, took a 2-1 lead in the third on a single by Arreola.

“It was a huge force,” Lions coach Cheyenne Coyle said of Ackermann. “I think he’d be super proud of (us), especially from last year to this year. A lot of people didn’t expect us to have this year.”

Pacifica’s journey includes being the preseason No. 1 team in Orange County to placing second in league.

“It was definitely a struggle but being able to come back and finally winning when it matters, I’m very proud of my team,” Bragg said.

PARIS OLYMPICS

NBC will air many events in daytime

Network plans to show some marquee events live for first time in a Games contested in Europe

By Joe Reedy
The Associated Press

Swimming, gymnastics and track and field fans can rejoice. For the first time in a European Olympics, those event finals will be televised live on network television in the United States.

NBC will have at least nine hours of weekday daytime coverage, expanding to at least 11 hours on weekends. With Paris six hours ahead of New York, the marquee finals will air live in the morning or late afternoon.

NBCUniversal’s Peacock streaming service will have every sport and event live, including all 329 medal events, from July 26-Aug. 11, 2024.

“The Paris Olympics are going to be the most binge-worthy event of 2024,” said Pete Bevacqua, chairman, NBC Sports. “For those wanting to watch the competition as it happens, Peacock will have everything live, creating the greatest single destination in sports media history.”

Most fans have wanted to watch Olympic events live. NBCUniversal has done that in the past with most sports, using its sister channels for around-the-clock coverage, but has kept the marquee events and finals for prime time.

During the Tokyo Games two years ago, the only way to watch gymnastics finals live was on Peacock or other NBC Sports digital platforms.

This will be the first time since 2012 that a Summer Games are being held in Europe. The London Games marked the first time NBC had a site devoted to streaming ev-



DAVID J. PHILLIP — AP FILE PHOTO, 2012

Sanya Richards-Ross, right, of the U.S. celebrates winning gold in the 4x400-meter relay at the London Olympics. The event figures to be on live TV in 2024.

ery event live by using the Olympics world feed. That meant track fans could stream the 100-meter finals live while most waited until watching the taped coverage on NBC in prime time.

While some may look at this as an evolution in NBC’s coverage, Molly Solomon, the executive producer and president of NBC Olympics production, termed it as a better way of taking advantage of the time zone.

“I believe you take each Olympics separately. I love after you finish an Olympics, you get to start with a clean slate for the next one,” she said. “To bring the Olympics to the greatest number of people, how can we take advantage of the time zone? And so what we did when you look at six hours ahead, we’re like we can take over NBC in the daytime, and have live competition all day long, including the most popular sports, their finals in the afternoon on NBC.”

The prime time show will show replays of the important events from the day while adding storytelling and other features.

“So really prime time in Paris will be the best of the best. And the time zone gives us the opportunity to create an amazing storytelling event,” Solomon said. “This gives us the opportunity to reimagine and contemporize coverage.”

Prime time host Mike Tirico also will be used during the morning and weekday coverage when there are marquee finals.

Besides streaming every sport and event, Peacock will have on-demand replays and original programming, including preview and recap shows spotlighting marquee sports.

This will be third Olympics for Peacock, which launched in 2020, although the first Summer Games in which it has all events.

“I think this is going to be a chance for fans to engage in ways that they haven’t really been able to before, because you’re going to have all of these content options,” Peacock president Kelly Campbell said. “We’re giving people this flexibility to watch and enhance the viewing experience.”

U.S. viewers streamed 5.5 billion minutes from Tokyo, a 22% increase over Rio in 2016, according to NBC and Nielsen.

NBC is hoping the expanded hours will help ratings rebound after the Tokyo and 2022 Beijing Winter Games, which were held in pandemic conditions without fans.

Tokyo averaged 15.6 million prime-time viewers, including cable and streaming. That was down 42% from Rio. Beijing fared worse, with a combined average of 11.4 million.

MLB

New movie looks at life, career of legendary Berra

By Ronald Blum
The Associated Press

NEW YORK » Lindsay Berra wanted grandpa Yogi remembered as a constant in Most Valuable Player voting before he was a regular in “Bartlett’s Familiar Quotations.”

“He played his last game on May 9, 1965, and then spent nearly 50 years making commercials and coaching and saying funny things on television,” she said of the Hall of Fame catcher who spent 18 seasons playing for the New York Yankees. “If you’re under 50 years old, you have no recollection of grandpa as a player at all. But you’ve seen him on television your whole life, right? So I think it’s a recency bias.”

“It Ain’t Over,” a 98-minute documentary on Yogi Berra’s life, aims to elevate his playing career alongside his persona as a cultural icon. The Sony Pictures Classics film opens in theaters in the New York tri-state area and Los Angeles today, which would have been Berra’s 98th birthday.

Producer Peter Sobiloff attended the Yogi Berra Museum Celebrity Golf Classic on June 11, 2018. He asked Yogi’s sons if he could make a documentary about their father.

Sobiloff called director Sean Mullin, who met with Berra’s sons that fall, got permission and raised the financing.

Lindsay, a daughter of Larry Berra, wasn’t originally involved.

“I met Sean a couple of months after that and just immediately started peppering him with texts and emails like: We got to get Vin Scully, you got to get Bobby Richardson, you got to get Tony Kubek, you got to get



SONY PICTURES CLASSICS VIA AP

This image shows poster art for “It Ain’t Over,” a documentary about New York Yankees great Yogi Berra.

Héctor López, you got to get Roger Angell. And you’re a Hollywood person and you don’t know these people. You need me to get you these interviews, so let’s go!”

The opening gets to the point directly: Berra was missing when Hank Aaron, Johnny Bench, Sandy Koufax and Willie Mays were introduced as the greatest living players at the 2015 All-Star Game in Cincinnati, two months before Berra’s death at age 90. The so-called Franchise Four was determined by 25 million fan votes.

Lindsay was incensed.

Yogi was an 18-time All-Star. Berra won three MVPs and finished among the top four in seven straight votes from 1950-56, behind only Mike Trout’s eight from 2012-19. Berra hit .285 with 358 homers and 1,430 RBIs and set World Series records with 71 hits and 10 titles — plus three more rings as a coach.

But his post-playing work as a TV pitchman and quipster defined his image.

Lindsay wound up becoming the movie’s executive producer and the narrator.