

SPORTS MONDAY

Daily Nexus

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Gauchos Take Two From Fullerton; NCAA Regional Berth Looks Likely

■ UCSB Upsets Defending National Champs, Tied for 2nd in Big West

By Curtis Kaiser
Staff Writer

Heading to Titan Field to take on a Cal State Fullerton squad ranked third in the nation and boasting a 16-game home win streak, the UCSB baseball team didn't figure to stand much of a chance in its final conference series of the season.

However, not only did the Gauchos (32-16 overall, 14-7 Big West) take two of three games from the Titans (41-10, 13-6), winning 9-4 Saturday and 10-9 Sunday to finish in a second-place tie with UNLV in the conference, but UCSB nearly pulled off a sweep, losing 4-3 Friday only after a controversial ninth-inning non-call by the umpire crew.

Sunday in front of 2,092 Fullerton faithful at Titan Field, the Gauchos posted what was the program's most important victory in quite some time, a win that all but guarantees UCSB a return to the top 25 rankings and a trip to the NCAA regionals for the first time since 1990.

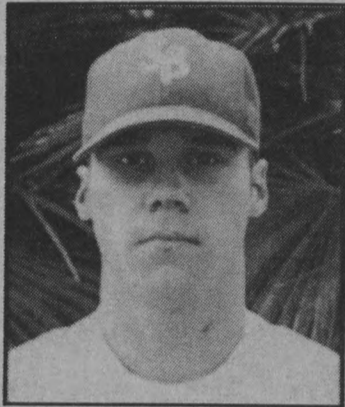
Freshman catcher Justin Lehr's two-out, three-run homer to right field in the ninth inning off Fullerton reliever Mark Kotsay handed CSUF its 10th defeat of the season and capped a successful weekend for the Gauchos.

"I was looking for a fastball," Lehr said. "When I hit it, I wasn't sure what to think. At first I thought it would be caught, but I guess the adrenaline I had gave it what it needed to get out."

Early in Sunday's game, it looked as if UCSB would have to settle for one win on the weekend. By the fifth inning, the Titans had chased sophomore

starter Seth Bean out of the game and taken a commanding 7-2 lead. However, the Gauchos began to claw back while junior reliever Jorvic Salazar kept the Fullerton lineup, the third best in the nation, scoreless until the ninth.

Santa Barbara put one run on the board in the sixth and added two in the seventh to narrow the



Justin Lehr

score to 7-5, where it remained until the ninth.

Fullerton Head Coach Auggie Garrido brought in Kotsay, the 1995 college player of the year and a possible Olympic team member this year who is also the Titans' center fielder, to close out the game.

Junior second baseman Clark Parker led off the inning by drawing a walk. After Kotsay struck out junior left fielder Brett Hardy, junior designated hitter Dave Willis, senior center fielder Wynter Phoenix and senior third baseman Lou Tapia all singled, tying the game. After junior first baseman Brooks Morris popped up, Lehr took a Kotsay offering and deposited it just over the right-field fence to give the

Gauchos a 10-7 lead.

Tapia, who had four hits on the afternoon along with three RBI, didn't let the pressure of the situation affect him when Kotsay put him behind in the count.

"I was hitting the ball well all day," he said. "He threw the first one by me, but I stayed with it and ended up hitting it cleanly up the middle."

The game didn't end easily for UCSB, however. Fullerton mounted a brief rally in the bottom of the ninth when catcher Brian Loyd hit a two-run shot off Salazar, his third round-tripper and sixth and seventh RBI of the game, bringing the Titans within one, but the threat was ended when Phoenix threw out left fielder Steve Chatham as he tried to advance from first to third on second baseman Mike Lamb's two-out single.

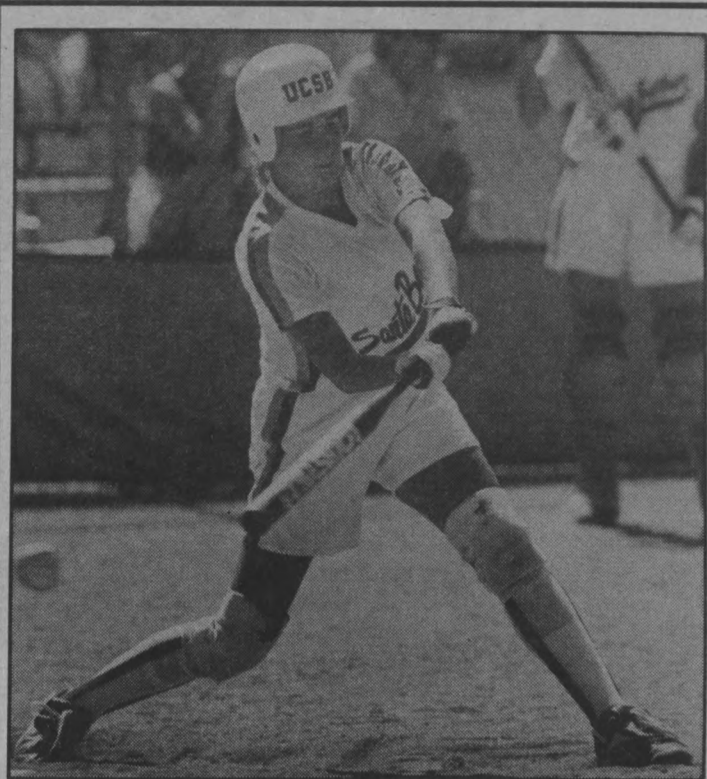
Bob Brontsema has been a part of the Gaucho baseball program since 1982 as a player, assistant coach and now as a third-year head coach. He did not hesitate to describe the importance of Sunday's victory.

"That game ranks as one of the biggest and greatest in the 15 years I've been in the program, and there have been a few," he said.

Saturday's game featured a gutsy performance by UCSB freshman starting pitcher David Uris (4-1), who hurled the first complete game of his collegiate career. Uris showed impressive control on the afternoon, walking only one Titan.

One reason for Uris' success may have been the large lead the Gaucho lineup spotted him. Thanks to the UCSB bats, Willis' and Phoenix's in particular, Uris

See WINS, p.3A



DAN THIBODEAU/Daily Nexus

Atwood Throws a Two-Hit Shutout; Off-Field Incidents Bring On-Field Distractions

By Michael Cadilli
Staff Writer

At times there was very good softball played by UCSB this weekend — and at other times it was downright ugly as the Gauchos dropped three of four games this weekend in their final games of the season.

Seniors Stacy Atwood and Michelle Ray each homered in the second game of Saturday's doubleheader at Campus Diamond against the #9 Cal State Fullerton Titans, and Atwood threw a two-hit, 1-0 shutout in game one of "seniors day" Sunday to beat the #23 conference champion Long Beach State 49ers.

But the whole weekend was marred by a situation off the field that manifested itself on the field in the second game versus LBSU on Sunday.

The event staff had to warn an unruly crowd of Gaucho fans (some of whom were drinking from a keg that was eventually confiscated by campus police at the beginning of game one) out in left field for using profanity — a circumstance that led to the forced removal of people from that area and the second arrival of police.

After five innings into game two, Long Beach State's Head Coach Pete Manarino and both umpires objected to the atmosphere in which the contest was being played — resulting in the near canceling of the game.

"I don't think anything bad happened. I just think the umpires didn't want anything to happen," said Cam Stephens, a UCSB athletic administrator who was taking care of the situation. "We don't tolerate drinking — they either have to get rid of it or leave."

"I guess the fans got involved and there was a lot of verbal abuse," Manarino said. "When fans were abusive to the umpires and my players — when it gets personal — you have to consider calling the game."

The profanity that several fans were using included the word "horseshit." The crowd seemed to be vocalizing this word to protest a situation that

occurred a week ago on a Northern California road trip. The story goes, Head Coach Liz Kelly suspended senior Maria Costa for saying the word "horseshit" in a discussion with Kelly after a game in which Costa was benched.

Several players voiced concern over Costa's punishment and threatened to boycott the series with the Titans. The athletes decided to play after all, but the emotional damage had been done and tensions ran high.

"I just think Kelly blew this thing out of proportion. We've been cussing all year and we just didn't agree with [Maria's punishment]," senior J.J. Cannon said. "We felt so strongly against it, we decided to take a stand."

"It's unfortunate this had to happen with four games left in the season, when no punishment has been given out all year for profanity," Costa said.

But Kelly did what she felt was right in assessing both the benching of Costa a week ago and the subsequent disciplinary action.

"I suspended her for using profanity and it's been blown way out of proportion," she said. "In this case I benched a player because she wasn't performing [two hits in her last 30 at-bats], and at the division I level you have to be able to handle that."

The internal strife appeared to carry over in the series with the Titans (39-24 overall, 17-13 in the Big West) as Santa Barbara generated only one hit, by junior left fielder Danelle Lovetro, and lost 9-0 (in a five-inning mercy rule game).

Game two saw Atwood and Ray each homer, but Fullerton hit a game-winning three-run home run of its own in the seventh frame to win the contest 6-3.

But Atwood and the Gauchos (20-30, 9-23) rebounded against Long Beach State (34-17, 22-6), as the senior right-hander allowed only two hits while sitting down five in a complete-game shutout to improve her record to 9-10.

See STRIFE, p.3A

UCSB Track and Field Update

By Brian Arbour
Reporter

The UCSB men's and women's track and field teams clicked at just the right time as they hosted the final home meet of the season Saturday in the 15th annual Nick Carter Invitational.

The event, named after the former UCSB head coach and record-breaking runner, was an unscored meet that featured Cal State Bakersfield and Cal Poly San Luis Obispo as Santa Barbara's competitors.



DAN THIBODEAU/Daily Nexus

GOING FOR GOLD: The men's and women's track and field teams had many personal bests in the Nick Carter Gaucho Invitational, named after the former UCSB head coach.

"We derive a lot of satisfaction from a meet like this, being on your home track peaking at the end of the season," said UCSB Head Coach Pete Dolan.

Women

With five personal records for the Gauchos and times that were much better than expected, the 1,500-meter run became the highlight of the invitational.

"The women's 1,500 was the race of the year," said Dolan. "It was Gaucho magic. It was a coach's dream race."

Sophomore Gabriela Rodriguez, the event's second-place

finisher and winner of the Outstanding Gaucho Female award for the invitational, met her goal of running under 4.40 with a time of 4.339.

"I PR'd [personal record] by 11 seconds. That's just unreal to me," Rodriguez said. "I couldn't even imagine it yesterday."

Sound individual performances were posted in other events, making the meet well-rounded for UCSB. Sophomore Tania Maync took top honors in the high jump (5'3 3/4"), while senior Lisa Knott placed second in the 100-meter hurdles (15.06) and grabbed third place in the 400-meter hurdles. Junior Mary Wilson finished second in the javelin competition (135'9") behind potential Olympian Kim Carter (142'4").

Men

Senior Eli Gladden competed in his last home meet for UCSB and had a great going-out party. Gladden won the trophy for the outstanding Gaucho male in the invitational and reached his personal best with a 6'10 1/4" high jump to earn first place in the event.

"This is the best meet I've ever had, mark-wise," Gladden said. "I'm glad I did it here."

He was also upbeat about the team's overall success.

"The team really came together this week more than it

See NICK, p.3A



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WINS

Continued from p.1A had a 2-0 lead before he took the mound in the first and a 6-0 lead when he toed the rubber in the second frame.

Phoenix posted two hits and four RBI in the game, while Willis delivered three hits and four RBI, including his second home run of the weekend and 15th of the season.

Friday's contest, which began under the lights at 7 p.m. in front of 1,943 fans, featured a pitcher's duel between UCSB junior starter Bryan Noyes (5-2) and CSUF hurler Brent Billingsley (10-1).

Noyes dominated early, taking a no-hitter into the sixth inning and allowing

just four hits before tiring in the ninth. After allowing an infield single to Lamb and pitching two straight balls to third baseman Tony Martinez, Noyes was removed in favor of Gauchos junior closer John Minton, who pitched two more balls to Martinez before surrendering a run-scoring double down the left-field line to shortstop Jack Jones, a U.S. Olympic team hopeful. Minton proceeded to walk Chatham intentionally, loading the bases.

Brontsema then went to the bullpen to summon Sunday's starter Bean, a strategy which worked well for UCSB two weeks ago when Noyes came out of the bullpen to earn a save against New Mexico State. However, the

Gauchos didn't have the same luck this time around.

Pinch-hitter Scott Seal skied a Bean delivery into shallow center field, where Phoenix made a diving catch for the first out of the inning. Pinch-runner Nakia Hill managed to score from third base on the out, supposedly tagging up on the play. However, Hill had clearly not returned to the bag to tag up before scoring. Despite a 10-minute discussion among the three-man umpire crew, Brontsema, pitching coach Tim Montez and members of the Gauchos infield, the call stood and the game was tied at 3-3. Kotsay then doubled in Jones with the winning run.

Brontsema refused to ponder what might have been if the umpires had made the correct call and UCSB had held on to win on Friday.

"If we would have looked to the past, we would have been swept," he said. "Instead, we lived in the present and ended up taking the last two."

In some bad news for the Gauchos, the team's leading hitter, senior outfielder/designated hitter Ryan Kritscher, who went 3-4 on Friday to raise his batting average to .400, fractured a bone in his hand diving back to first base and will be out for two to four weeks.

STRIFE

Continued from p.1A Ray collected her 50th and 51st hits of the season in the game and scored the only run on an RBI fielder's choice ground-out by junior Jessica Montgomery (7 RBI).

But tensions ran high in that second game, marked by two incidents in which, one, Ray seemed to get thrown at on purpose by LBSU's hurler Tammy Dietrich, and, two, pitcher Megan O'Brien was spiked also on purpose on a play at the plate that nearly resulted in a scuffle.

O'Brien took the 6-0 loss despite throwing well (giving up two earned runs on six hits with seven K's).

NICK

Continued from p.1A ever has this season," he said. "Everyone's peaking right now, which is really good. That's always going to bring the team closer."

The distance squad displayed its continual improvement, turning in a dominating performance. Junior Brian Steip was victorious in an exciting 1,500-meter run (3:55.9), with five other Gauchos placing in the top eight.

Sophomore Liam Jones turned in another first-place performance for UCSB in the steeplechase with a 9:36.2 time.

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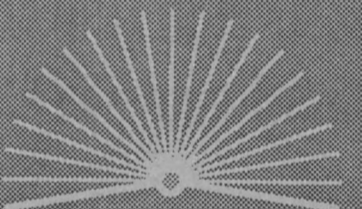


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