



HOUSTON COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS

fort bend sun - sports

Diving catch saves Travis softball against Austin

Print Page

By **COREY ROEPKEN**

Published: 04.21.09

Travis High School shortstop Kaitlyn Jones was not even supposed to play softball on Monday, but with archrival Austin on the schedule Jones wasn't about to miss the game.

It's a good thing for the Tigers she didn't. She turned out to be the heroine.

Jones' diving catch in right field in the seventh inning saved two runs from scoring and ended Travis' 2-0 victory over host Austin. The triumph assured Travis (11-4) of a playoff berth in its second year of varsity play. Austin, which began the game tied with Travis for third place in District 23-5A, also clinched a playoff berth Monday but only because Dulles lost to Clements on Monday.

The Tigers also would have clinched a spot in the postseason with a loss to Austin, but winning Monday's game seemed to be a bigger deal in the immediate aftermath.

"Just before that pitch I had a feeling the ball was coming to me," Jones said. "The ball came and it was do or die. I had to do it for my seniors. This just opens up all of our eyes to the playoffs."

Jones missed the last couple of games due to a stress fracture in her back. When her doctor told her it could not get worse if she played she decided to take the field. Jones normally plays shortstop, but coach Gary Crissman tried to hide her in right field so she didn't have the constant pressure.

"I put her in the least excitable position then she goes and dives and makes a helluva play," Crissman said. "I guess that's somebody watching over us the way it worked out."

With starting pitcher Alexis Estrada cruising through the first 19 outs it did not seem like Travis would need any clutch performances at all. Estrada struck out the leadoff batter in the home half of the seventh before getting into some trouble.

Courtney Shaw and Morgan Hawkins reached on back-to-back singles and stayed on first and second base as Estrada struck out Kristin Paige. Estrada had Siri Soth down to her final strike when she was called for an illegal pitch because she licked the fingers on her pitching hand while standing on the mound. That allowed the runners to move up one base apiece.

The right-handed hitting Soth sliced a line drive into shallow right field that Jones laid out for and caught inches before it hit the grass just inside the foul line. Instead of Austin tying the game on a potential triple, Travis took the victory.

Austin coach Terry Reyna tipped her visor to Jones.

"She did exactly what I would like my defense to do in that situation," Reyna said. "When you want something you have to go out and get it."

Estrada ended with 13 strikeouts and zero walks. She gave up four hits. Estrada also had been injured but made sure to make an extra effort to return for Monday's game. Before the seventh inning the only Austin batter she allowed to reach base was leadoff batter Katie Kilgore (two singles).

Travis scored one run in each of the first two innings. Melissa Billingsley (three hits) led off the game

with a double and scored three batters later on a two-out fielding error by the shortstop. Rachel Webster had the game's only RBI with her two-out double in the second that scored Jones. Holly Berger had a double and a single for Travis.

The Tigers return to the field to take on first-place Elkins Tuesday night. There's a chance they won't have Monday's star, though. She needs to recover from the pain.

"The sixth and seventh innings I could really feel it," Jones said. "After that catch I'm going to go home, take some Alleve, get some ice and just pass out for the rest of the night."

Copyright © 2009 - Houston Community Newspapers Online

[x] Close Window