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Fort Bend Sun - Sports

Travis swept out of softball playoffs

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The last batted ball fell into the left fielder's glove and all Rachel Webster could do was weep – the emotion of her final swing too much for her take.

The first-base coach embraced the senior who couldn't believe her high school softball career had just ended.

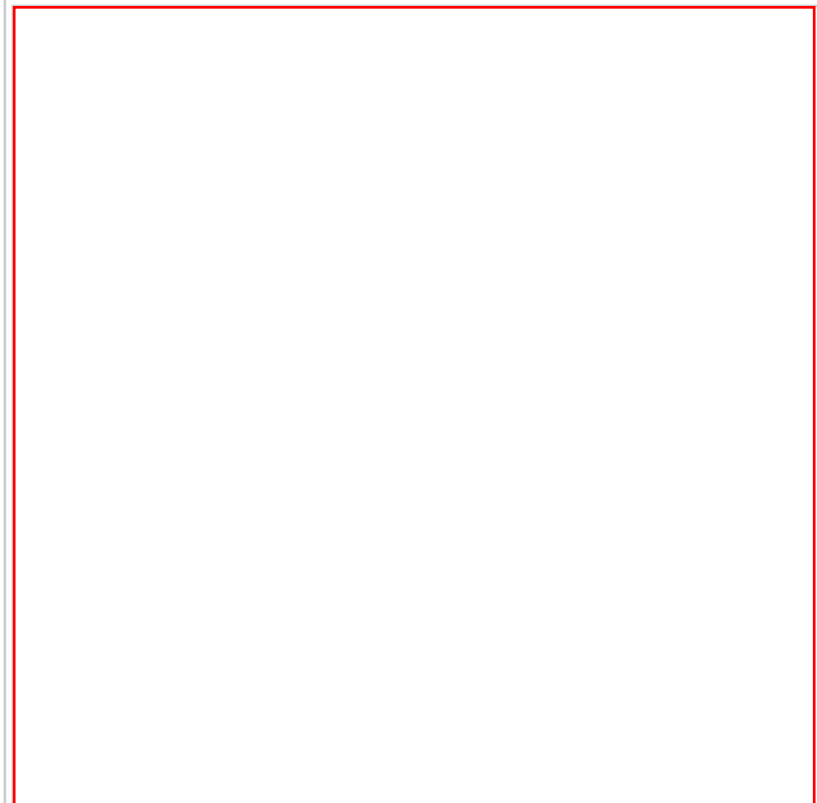
The tying run was on third base and the winning run on second base when Webster flew out in the final at-bat as the Travis Tigers lost to visiting Clear Creek, 3-2, Saturday afternoon in the second game of the teams' best-of-three series that opened the Region III-5A playoffs.

Clear Creek won the first game of the series Friday night at home, 2-1, then finished the sweep behind a strong effort from pitcher Katie Moulder. Moulder was perfect through five innings Saturday before Travis broke through for two runs in the sixth inning.

Just like in Friday's 2-1 loss, though, Travis left the tying and winning runs in scoring position in its last at-bat.

"I'm glad we went down with a fight," said Becca Rush, the only other senior on Travis' team. "It was really a bittersweet ending. We were so pumped. (Rachel's) hit was so close."

Webster gave Travis its first run with her RBI single in the sixth inning. Kaitlyn Jones and Maryssa Silva had reached in front of her. Melissa Billingsley followed Webster with another RBI. Nobody was out at that point, and the Nos. 2, 3 and 4 batters were coming up. Moulder struck out the next two batters and induced a pop up to the second



Despite strong defense, Travis ends run at home against Clear Creek. Photo by Kar Hlava

baseman.

"Katie Moulder has a lot to do with this (result)," Travis coach Gary Crissman said. "We knew we were going to have our work cut out."

Travis' seventh-inning rally began when Kim Pepper reached on an error by the Clear Creek second baseman (her third in two innings). Jones (two hits) followed with a one-out double to get Pepper to third base. Moulder responded with a strikeout and Webster's fly out to left field.

Moulder finished with eight strikeouts and no walks. She gave up three hits. Travis' Alexis Estrada struck out seven and walked three. She gave up six hits.

Despite all the tears and long faces the Travis players showed after the game there was some consolation in the fact they had qualified for the postseason in only their second year of varsity play.

The Tigers return nine of their 11 varsity players next season. Rush and Webster are the only seniors. They said they have high hopes for future Travis teams.

"We got to the playoffs," she said. "Now our team next year will have the experience and they will excel."

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