

Walk-off puts Lady Warriors into region lead

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KENNESAW — North Cobb is now in the driver's seat.

The Lady Warriors rallied from a 3-0 deficit to post a 4-3 nine-inning victory over Harrison on Thursday in a Region 4AAAAAA home game.

The win lifted North Cobb (7-3, 4-1) ahead of Harrison (11-2, 3-1) in the region standings. The Lady Warriors now own the tiebreak between the two teams, and they are in line to host the region championship series.

"It feels great to get this win," North Cobb coach Jo Beth Weaver said. "It's still early, and there are a lot of region games to play, but we want to be in this position and try to host the region championship. We're in the thick of this, and that's what we want."

Olivia Mould proved to be a big catalyst in the win, giving up three unearned runs on seven hits to pick up the complete-game victory. Mould also batted 2-for-4 with a two-out RBI triple in the sixth to pull North Cobb to within 3-2.

Courtesy runner Mikila Mullan scored the game-tying run on the next at-bat, and Mould plated the winning run with one out in the bottom of the ninth, off Carli Troutman's fielder's choice.

"It's exciting to win," Mould said. "We wanted to prove ourselves after we had such a bad game against Kennesaw Mountain last week. We got down early, but we were able to battle back."

Weaver was also proud of her senior pitcher.

"Olivia had both sides of the game in her back pocket (Thursday)," Weaver said. "She owned the offense and the defense. She's one of the best pitchers I've had at North Cobb, and for her to break that triple in the sixth was big."

Like it did in North Cobb's 12-3 loss to Kennesaw Mountain last week, errors did the Lady Warriors in early against the Lady Hoyas. Two first-inning errors, along with a RBI single from Mikenzie Vaughn and two-out, two-run double from Maddie Davenport put Harrison in front 3-0.

The miscues, however, didn't materialize the rest of the way. Backed by her improved defense, Mould stranded runners in scoring position three times over the next five innings, and North Cobb finally got its opportunity to strike in the sixth.

Back-to-back singles from Iman Muhammad and Casey Page off reliever Brooke Taylor gave the Lady Warriors hope for a comeback. A two-out error plated Muhammad for North Cobb's first run, and Mould followed with her triple to score Page and shorten the deficit to 3-2.

Neither team could bring home the international-tiebreaker runner in the eighth, and Harrison stranded that runner at third in the top of the ninth as Mould pitched out of a jam.

Emily Katchel came on in relief of Taylor in the bottom half of the ninth with Mould at second. McKenzie Krause, who was 3-for-3, hit a sacrifice bunt to move Mould to third and Troutman's fielder's choice sealed the walk-off win.

Mould didn't get down on herself after falling behind 3-0.

"I always practice with my dad to keep my focus," she said. "Once Harrison scored, it drove me to make the best pitches I could the rest of the game."

Muhammad and Page each batted 2-for-4.

Davenport was 2-for-3 with two RBIs for Harrison. Brooke Etheridge, Vaughn and Lindley Bruce also scored. Etheridge stole two bases.

Pierce Fox pitched well over the first five innings. She gave up five hits and didn't allow a run or a walk.

"We didn't execute at all," Harrison coach Matt Jones said. "We gave North Cobb so many extra outs in the sixth and seventh innings and beyond.

"It was ugly at the end. We didn't make the routine plays. We've skated around the errors we've made all year, and they caught up to us (Thursday). We lost discipline at the plate, and you can't win games like that."

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