

Moving On

■ Down to final out, Patrician rallies to sweep Escambia Academy and move into Class AA semi-finals against Marengo on Wednesday at 3 o'clock in Linden

By Colin Merritt
The Choctaw Sun

ATMORE — Down 2-1 in their last at-bat, Patrician appeared destined to drop the opener of their best-two-out-of-three first-round playoff series with Escambia Academy on Friday. However, a lead-off triple to start the seventh from Casey Landrum set the table for a two-out dribbler down the third base line off the bat of Robert Anderson that turned into a throwing error and allowed Landrum to come home with the dramatic tying run.

The Saints would take advantage of the good fortune, scoring the winning run in the top of the eighth on a two-out double from B.J. Bonner that plated Lance Gibson, who had reached on a walk and advanced to second on a fielders choice.

Not only did Gibson score the winning run, he also picked up the win, going all eighth innings while allowing just four hits and striking out nine with just one walk.

In game two, Patrician sent sophomore Mikell Bonner to the hill. The youngster didn't disappoint either, going all seven innings while allowing just five hits in Patrician's 6-2 win that advanced

the Saints into the state semi-final round where they will take on Marengo Academy.

Leading 2-1 in the fifth, Mikell's big brother B.J. Bonner, who had the game winning hit in game one, would strike again with a timely two-run double that keyed a three-run inning, giving the Saints a comfortable 5-1 lead. The elder Bonner finished with two hits, two RBI and two runs scored. Clay Goodwin and Lance Gibson also had two-hit games, while Casey Landrum, Dallas Anderson, and Tony Randolph all had one hit apiece for the Saints.

With the sweep of Escambia, Patrician (19-7) moves into the next round of the AISA Class AA playoffs where they will face Marengo Academy in Linden. The semi-final best-two-out-of-three series will start this Wednesday (5/2) at 2 p.m. and finish, if necessary, on Thursday at 3:30 p.m. The winner between Patrician and Marengo

will then face the winner of the Lowndes/Meadowview series for the state championship in Montgomery on May 8th and 9th.

The Saints split the season series with Marengo with an exciting 9-8 win over the Longhorns last Tuesday in Butler. The Saints actually led 6-1 in the fourth before a six-run sixth inning gave Marengo the lead. After tacking on one more run for an 8-7 lead, Marengo was one out from the win with PA's number nine hitter coming to the plate. The Saints pinch-hit freshman Brandon Meeks, and the move payed off when he singled to bring lead-off hitter Clay Goodwin to the plate. Goodwin promptly sent the ball over the left-center field fence to give the Saints the thrilling 9-8 victory with a walk-off two-run homer.

Goodwin was 3-for-4 with three RBI and three runs scored, while Lance

Torn ligament to keep Meeks off the mound

On Monday after visiting Dr. James Andrews in Birmingham, Barry Meeks, Patrician's ace pitcher, learned that he has a slightly torn ligament in his right throwing arm. The injury will prevent Meeks from pitching this season, but he will still be able to bat as the Saints make a run at a second state title in three years when they travel to Marengo on Wednesday for a semi-final series with the Longhorns.

The junior, Meeks, leads PA with nine home runs.

Lady Tigers settle for Area runner-up

■ Choctaw County loses to Greensboro, settles for second place in 3A Area 5

GREENSBORO — The Lady Tigers' reward for losing on the road to Greensboro 7-5 on Friday will be a return trip to Greensboro when the area tournament gets underway this Thursday (5/3) at 1:30 p.m. That's when the Tigers and Greensboro will meet to determine the area champion in a best-two-out-of-

three series. The winner of the series will take a top-seed and host the first-round of the state playoffs on May 8th. The loser will also make the first round, but will have to travel as the two-seed.

CCHS (6-17) wrapped up their regular season on Tuesday after press time with a game against Millry in Butler.

Tigers snuffed by Geneva

■ Choctaw falls 10-0 to state's No. 4-ranked squad

GENEVA — Choctaw County starting pitcher Jamarus Blakley didn't get out of the second inning against the powerful Geneva Bulldogs on Tuesday in the Tigers' first-round playoff game. Blakley surrendered six runs on six hits, two of which were home runs, before exiting the game with Choctaw trailing 6-0.

The cushion was all Geneva would need as senior Lance Dixon held Choctaw County to just two hits in the game. Seniors Ricky Bush and Bryan Winston picked up the Tigers' hits. The 10-0 loss ended Choctaw County's 2007 season with a 10-19 record.

Rebels swept at Coosa

■ Coosa Valley pitchers give up just two hits and strikeout 29 in playoff sweep of South Choctaw

GADSDEN — The Rebels wrapped up their 2007 season in disappointing fashion after getting swept, 9-0 and 10-0, in the first-round of the playoffs by Coosa Valley on Friday. The Rebels picked up just two hits, one in each game, in the season-ending losses that dropped their record to 9-13. The nine-win season was a big turn around from last year, however, when the Rebels went 0-14 and missed the playoffs.



Choctaw Sun photos by Marcus Gates

Swinging and Pitching for a Cure

BUTLER -- Regions Bank sponsored a round-robin softball tournament to raise money for 'Relay for Life' on Saturday in Butler. The event featured teams from Butler, Gilbertown and Livingston and guaranteed each squad two games. Butler's Channing Coody (left) swings for the fences in the Slammers win over the Lady Bugs, while Cheslea Bowerman (right) unleashes a pitch for the Gilbertown Mystics in their 6-1 win over the Butler Babes.

Girls Weekend

■ Lady Saints and Lady Rebels head for Montgomery to battle for softball state titles

By Colin Merritt
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MONTGOMERY — Starting this Friday, the AISA state championship softball tournaments will be held at Lagoon Park in Montgomery. Choctaw County will have two representatives at the event, Patrician Academy and South Choctaw Academy.

The Lady Saints from Patrician Academy will try and return to the Class AA final for the second year in a row when they begin their championship quest this Friday at 11:30 a.m. against Evangel Christian. Also on

Friday, the South Choctaw Lady Rebels make their return to the state tournament after a one year absence to start their run for a Class A crown when they face Open Door at 11:30 a.m. on Friday.

The third-seeded Rebels will enter the eight-team state tournament on the strength of a 10-11 season that garnered them a West Area championship over Central Christian, who also made the tourney, but as the eight-seed. After playing a schedule consisting mostly of Class AA and AAA schools, the Rebels, who were a Class AA team last season, have to be considered one of the favorites to win the Class A title thanks to a strong pitching staff anchored by Trystan Mosley and a solid batting order led by hot-hitting senior Arielle Campbell.

Mosley has started almost every game for the Rebels and sports a low ERA of 1.77. Campbell, a senior shortstop, has the highest batting average on the team at a lofty .477. A defensive liability at times last season, Campbell has turned into a sure-fielding shortstop and

has cut back on errors significantly. The Rebels also feature the speedy duo of lead-off hitter Koen Lindsey and Kate Dahlberg (.325) at the top of the order. It's imperative for the Rebels' success that these two reach base to set the table for sluggers Campbell and Jessie Chadwick in the middle of the order.

The opening match with Open Door is actually a difficult one for the Rebels. South Choctaw squeaked past Open Door, 9-8, last week after falling behind on the road 6-0 in the first inning before rallying for the win. If the Rebels beat Open Door they will face the winner of Ashford/Autauga at 3 p.m. The losers of those two will play an elimination game at 1 p.m.

Patrician Academy (26-9) will enter the tournament as the three-seed after winning the West Area title over Marengo in a playoff game. The state's highest ranked Class AA team at sixth, the Lady Saints are no stranger to the state tournament after having finished third for five years running until last season's runner-up to Tuscaloosa Academy. Now with Tuscaloosa in Class AAA, the road appears clear for these Saints to finally take home the title.

Senior leader Kylie Lewis teams with the multi-talented Allie Roach, super-pitcher Shayna Jimerson

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