

Synagogue Softball Wins for Kol Tikvah, Beth Ami, Aliyah and Or Ami

By Ashley Zeldin, Contributing Writer | PUBLISHED Jul 5, 2011 | Community

Temple Kol Tikvah of Woodland Hills avenged three in-season losses to Temple Judea in Tarzana during the Division A final of the Synagogue Softball league on June 26, posting a 22-8 victory over the defending champions.

“We had muscle, verve and desire, and we had fun,” Kol Tikvah manager Paul Thaler said.

The teams were tied 3-3 going into the fourth inning when Kol Tikvah Black broke the game open, scoring six runs each in the fourth and fifth innings.

Shortstop Ari Jacobs, son of Kol Tikvah Rabbi Emeritus Steven Jacobs, went 4-for-5 with 6 RBIs, as his team combined for 39 hits.

“They had a big inning, and we picked it up, but they had another big inning. We played deep and balls dropped in,” Temple Judea player/manager Barry Schoenbrun said.

Down 15-4 after the fifth, Temple Judea did not back down.

Elan Sieder’s two-out, three-run homer and an error by Jacobs playing a routine fly ball extended Temple Judea’s comeback hopes, but the middle innings proved too much for Schoenbrun’s team to overcome.

“We beat them three times this season, but lost when it counted,” said Schoenbrun, who started the Synagogue Softball program 16 years ago when he learned Temple Judea fielded a softball team that practiced but did not compete.

The league has grown to 34 teams across Southern California, comprising more than 660 players in four divisions.

Santa Clarita's Temple Beth Ami and Valley Village's Adat Ari El went extra innings in their Division B championship. Tied at 4 runs apiece after seven innings, Temple Beth Ami scored five runs in the 10th inning, and Adat Ari El tried to answer but couldn't, only managing two runs for the final 9-6 margin.

In Division C, the Aliyah A's from Temple Aliyah of Woodland Hills continued their season-long dominance, winning their second championship in three years with an 11-4 rout of Adat Ari El II.

"Both teams were very good sports," said Stuart Hoffman, A's catcher and manager. "Most of us are playing for the camaraderie, not for the competition."

Pitcher Mark Silverstein hurled a complete game, with only two earned runs, to complement last week's 14-0 shutout of Sinai Temple in the first round of the postseason.

After Adat Ari El II scored twice to narrow a comfortable A's lead to 5-3 in the top of the fifth, Hoffman inserted Marc Gross and Jeff Solny into the lineup in the bottom of the inning.

"The way I manage is everybody plays even if it's during a playoff game," Hoffman said.

That proved a smart move as Solny slammed a three-run homer to put the A's up 8-3; Gross went 2-for-2 in plate appearances.

The Division D game between Calabasas' Or Ami Plagues and the combined team of Ahavat Shalom and Ramat Zion from Northridge was plagued by early controversy.

After an error led to Mark Biase's home run, helping the Plagues even the score at 3-3, Ahavat Shalom/Ramat Zion contested the official score in the bottom of the third, contending that they were actually leading, 4-3. The official at the plate denied the protest.

Trailing 10-7, Ahavat Shalom/Ramat Zion loaded the bases in the top of the seventh with two outs, but Biase made a diving catch to preserve the win.

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