

Art of Stat Raised to State of the Art for Hart, Burbank Baseball Squads

Pitchers vs. batters and catchers vs. baserunners are not the only interesting matchups in a baseball game between Hart and Burbank.

Get ready for the battle of modems, disk drives and IBM compatibles.

Both teams will blend hardball with software in today's Foothill League game at Foy Park in Burbank. Neither will make a statistical move that isn't noticed—or programmed, collated and distributed.

Both teams employ computer-toting statisticians who record far more than the standard line score.

At Hart, Mike Gaber, 56, a Woodland Hills computer analyst for 24 years, has meticulously recorded the Indians' statistics for the past four years with the use of a Zenith Supersport 286 laptop computer.

Gaber, who provides copies of postgame box scores for all in attendance, as well as local newspapers, has become somewhat of a sideshow at Hart. More than once, Gaber has been featured in local publications.

"I just liked watching the team and I wanted to keep score," Gaber said.

So does Dave Johnson.

Johnson, 31, Burbank's first-year coach, owns and operates Major League Softball Inc., a computerized service that records statistics for more than 500 municipal softball teams throughout Southern California. Johnson's service keeps tabs on more than 6,000 players a week.

Armed with a Toshiba 1100, Johnson insists Burbank's statistics are more extensive.

"I'm not trying to put [Hart] down, but we have some capabilities they haven't even dreamed of yet," Johnson said. "Our computer can handle stuff on a league basis."

Johnson said his system, like Gaber's, provides a complete box score but also includes such details as play-by-play and pitch-by-pitch summaries, how a batter fares with runners in scoring position, a batter's average with two out and runners in scoring position, etc.

"I've trained my assistant to run it," Johnson said. "We've been scoring 9,000 games a year for the past four years."

Gaber insists that his computer is capable of providing similar in-depth data.

"It sounds a lot like the one I've

to be very interested to see it."

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Hardship proved: Leonice Brown, a junior running back who has transferred from Crespi to San Fernando, was granted athletic eligibility by the City Section at a hearing Thursday.

Brown lost his eligibility when he enrolled at San Fernando at the start of the spring semester without a change of residence. But the 12-member rules committee of the Interscholastic Athletics Office voted unanimously to restore his eligibility after hearing an appeal based on financial hardship.

"This was a decision that was reached easily," City Section Commissioner Hal Harkness said. "It was as cut and dried as any I've seen in four years here."

Brown rushed for 1,097 yards last year and also ran sprints on the Crespi track team. Despite Thursday's ruling, he remains academically ineligible until at least the 10-week mark of the semester next month.

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Sleight of hand: When it rains, it pours, and anyone needing substantiation need only to talk to Canoga Park Coach Jim Smith.

In Wednesday's 17-6 loss to San Fernando, Canoga Park (0-6) fell prey to the ol' hidden-ball trick. An infielder tagged a Canoga Park baserunner as the latter edged off second base, Smith said.

But that's only half of the story. San Fernando also turned a double play *without a ball being hit or a pitch being thrown.*

Canoga Park had runners on first and second with nobody out, Smith said, when the San Fernando catcher accidentally lobbed the ball over his pitcher's head.

The Canoga Park runner on second hesitated, then broke for third, where he was "thrown out by five feet," Smith said, shaking his head.

The Canoga Park runner on first then broke for second, but he too was tagged out.

"I swear, sometimes I think that the only thing running through these guys' heads is their batting averages," Smith grumbled.

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Who-woulda-believed-it dept.: Faith Baptist, winner of the Southern Section 1-A Division boys' basketball title, is the only

included in Cal-Hi Sports magazine's final state rankings.

Faith Baptist, which finished 20-11, finished No. 6 on Cal-Hi's Division V list.

The Hart girls' team (25-5) finished No. 9 in the girls' Division I rankings. The Santa Clara boys' team (28-0) finished No. 1 in Division IV.

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Add Faith Baptist: Although many basketball players are also on the Contenders' baseball team, their fortunes have been reversed.

In Faith Baptist's 26-1 loss to Culver City on Saturday, Troy Dunlap became the sixth player in state history to slam four home runs in one game, according to Cal-Hi. Dunlap also scored six runs, tying a Southern Section record.

"We were only down 1-0 after 4½ innings," Faith Baptist Coach Harry Morgan said. "Then he started finding that 290-foot fence."

The left-field fence at Faith Baptist is 290 feet from home.

"He really nailed a couple of them," Morgan said. "The other two were sort of iffy. Not to take anything away from the guy. Four home runs are four home runs."

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Add Cal-Hi: Michelle Palmisano of Thousand Oaks, a sophomore, finished third in the state in scoring average at 29.9 points a game. She finished behind Christina Adams of La Mesa Grossmont (38.6) and Amy Jalewalia of La Quinta (32.7).

Shon Tarver of Santa Clara finished sixth in the boys' division at 31.9. The state leader was Arizona-bound Tony Clark (43.2) of El Cajon Christian, which defeated Faith Baptist in the Southern California Division V final.

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Hello, Marty!: Most impressive varsity debut this season? How about that of Hart's Marty Downen, who moved up from the junior varsity for last Friday's Foothill League opener at Alhambra?

Downen, a junior first baseman, tripled and homered in Hart's 10-0 victory. Downen finished two for four with two runs scored and two runs batted in. On Tuesday, Downen doubled in Hart's 8-3 win over Burroughs.

Staff writers Steve Eiling, Vince Kowalick and John Lynch contributed to this note.