

Marlins divide twinbill with Blazers

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Having already clinched the division championship, Mercy High School split a pair of softball games Sunday with Livonia Ladywood, losing the first 3-2 and winning the second 3-1.

The visiting Blazers entered the makeup doubleheader without pitcher Briana Combs due to injury, and the Marlins lost their ace, sophomore Kayce Nieto, to an injury in the first game.

While batting in the bottom of the first inning, Nieto was hit on her pitching hand; the ball also hit the bat and was ruled a foul ball. With the next pitch, she was hit on the forearm.

Nieto started the next inning and retired the first batter on a flyout. But she lost the feeling in her hand, gave up two hits and left the game.

She didn't play the rest of the day, and assistant coach Jerry Ashe was unsure Monday when Nieto would be able to play again.

Mercy, which won the Catholic League Central Division crown with a 10-2



JOHN STORMZAND | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Mercy senior Megan Lawrence rounds second base in an earlier win over Marian en route to the Central Division title.

record, was guaranteed the championship after Ladywood split with Regina on Friday. The Blazers finished 7-5.

In the league tournament, the Marlins took a 25-6 record into a semifinal game Wednesday against the Riverview Gabriel Richard-

Warren Regina winner.

Olivia Silvestri pitched the rest of the first game and took the loss, allowing two runs on seven hits (nine total). Ladywood pitcher Alysa Gietl gave up five hits and two walks while striking out six.

Mercy's Lauren Hensick was

2-for-3 with an RBI single. Silvestri had an RBI on a sacrifice squeeze play that scored Megan Lawrence. Brittany Prior scored on the hit by Hensick.

Ladywood's Gina Sykes had two doubles and two RBI; Celeste Fidge was 2-for-2 and scored two runs. Gietl had an RBI single.

Jackie Murphy pitched a two-hit, complete game for the Marlins in the nightcap, striking out 10 and walking three. Mercy had seven hits off Gietl, who fanned five and issued one walk.

Lawrence was 3-for-3 with two RBI and a run scored. Prior added an RBI single.

MERCY 4, T.C. WEST 0: Kayce Nieto pitched a one-hit shutout Friday against host Traverse City West, recording 11 strikeouts and two walks.

Elizabeth Carlson hit two doubles, drove in one run and scored one for the Marlins. Brittany Prior and Katherine Garry had two hits apiece.

Nieto and Jackie Murphy each had an RBI single. Prior also had an RBI, and Garry scored a run.

TOURNAMENT TALLY: In the Petoskey tournament Saturday, Mercy, South Haven and Reese were 2-1 in pool play and tied for first place.

Mercy and South Haven were still tied after the first tiebreaker, which was runs allowed. South Haven had the advantage in the second criteria (total runs scored) and moved on to the playoffs.

Petoskey won the tournament for the first time in its 23-year history. All games were limited to either six innings or one and a half hours.

MERCY 3, SOUTH HAVEN 0: Olivia Silvestri pitched a two-hit shutout in Mercy's first tournament game Saturday, striking out 11 and walking one.

Nieto was 2-for-3 with a run-scoring triple, and Garry had an RBI single. Mercy scored its other run on a wild pitch.

REESE 4, MERCY 3: Reese scored its first two runs on Mercy errors and forced the game to extra innings tied at 2-2.

Each team scored a run in the seventh. In the eighth, Reese won it with a bases-loaded single.

Nieto allowed just four hits, and the two walks she issued were both intentional passes. She struck out 13.

Garry and Silvestri (double) had two hits and scored a run. Taylor Barrow scored in the seventh on an RBI squeeze bunt by Carlson.

MERCY 2, ESCANABA 1: Silvestri pitched five innings to get the win Saturday; she struck out seven and scattered five hits. Murphy pitched a scoreless sixth inning.

Prior's RBI single was the winning hit. Megan Lawrence hit safely and scored the first Mercy run on errors.