

SPORTS

■ CIF Baseball Playoffs

Flintridge Prep Rallies to Defeat Salesian in Semifinals

By Nick Ostiller
The Outlook

The Flintridge Prep varsity baseball team doesn't know when to give up. One-run deficits, three-run deficits and five-run deficits are usually sobering reminders that a loss is imminent. To the Rebels, though, they're simply red numbers on a black scoreboard. When each of those three dilemmas presented themselves at the Glendale Sports Complex during Tuesday's CIF-Southern Section Division 6 semifinal game against Los Angeles Salesian High School, the Rebels didn't care. Instead, they took deep breaths after each fall before picking themselves up and climbing the next mountain, eventually arriving at a summit that no Flintridge Prep team has reached in 64 years.

With their wild, 10-9 victory over the Mustangs in front of boisterous crowds on both sides of the field, the Rebels earned a trip to the CIF-SS championship game this Saturday at UC Riverside.

"It's the greatest feeling ever, man," said third-year Flintridge Prep head coach Guillermo Gonzalez. "Just knowing that these kids are doing something that the school has [not done since 1951]. I'm extremely happy for them. ... I just told these guys, 'Don't give up.' I believe that we have the best one-through-nine hitting squad in this whole division, and the guys believed it and they did it."

The Rebels' season appeared to be in serious jeopardy when Salesian took advantage of five Flintridge Prep errors and plated five unearned runs in the fourth inning to grab an 8-3 lead. The improbable turn of events deflated a home crowd that

had just watched the Rebels rally from an early 3-0 hole to tie the game during the previous inning.

But Flintridge Prep's bats came to life once again in the bottom of the fourth. After junior Theo Rosenfeld led off with a walk, sophomore Danny Chiarodit singled with one out, and another walk to junior Hamilton Evans loaded the bases for junior Robbie Leslie, who hit a sharp ground ball to Mustangs shortstop Patrick Peña. The junior flipped the ball to second base in order to start a double play, but his throw sailed wide and allowed two runs to score. Junior Cole Pilar then knocked in two more runs with a single to right. With the Rebels suddenly back in the game, Pilar advanced to second base on a wild pitch and brought home the tying run when junior Richard Pan's blooper dropped in right-center field.

"That's basically what we've been doing all year," said Gonzalez. "... I just told these guys 'Don't overthink. Pick a pitch you want to hit and just drive it somewhere.' And that's what they did."

Pan started the game on the mound for Flintridge Prep (16-12 overall record), and his control was an issue in the second inning. Back-to-back walks with the bases loaded allowed Salesian to extend its lead to 3-0, and then poor defense behind Pan two innings later spelled the end of his afternoon. Leslie, who had pitched a complete game against Cypress Oxford Academy in the quarterfinals on Friday, relieved Pan during the midst of the Rebels' fourth-inning defensive meltdown.

"Richard, obviously, didn't have his best stuff today, so we had to all pick him up, and the whole team collectively did that," said Leslie.

Salesian (15-10 overall record)



Photo courtesy Eric Danielson

The Flintridge Prep baseball team defeated Los Angeles Salesian, 10-9, to move on and play its first CIF-SS championship game since 1951.

created some breathing room in the top of the fifth, using three consecutive singles with two outs to reclaim the lead at 9-8. The Mustangs then brought in one of their top pitchers, senior Saul Garcia, to begin the close-out process. He retired the Rebels in order in the bottom of the fifth.

Leslie fired back to hold the Mustangs scoreless in the top of the sixth, which set up the final stage of Flintridge Prep's comeback. Pilar started the rally with a one-out bloop single to right-center field, the switch-hitter's third hit of the game.

"I really didn't feel good left-handed today, so I went right-handed," said Pilar, who finished with three RBIs. "The chips fell in our favor. Hits fell when they needed to and it was just a good game overall."

After a wild pitch allowed Pilar to take second base, Pan sent the home crowd into a frenzy when he ripped a single into left field that tied the game at 9-9.

"I think mentally I just cleared myself from pitching," said Pan. "Robbie and I both have the problem of when we're pitching, we don't hit well. So once I stepped off that mound, mentally I was just locked in: 'All I've got to do is hit, and I've got to bring my team back.' He just laid one a little inside and I just turned on it. ... I didn't want to pop up anymore. I didn't want to strike out. I just wanted to put it in play for my team."

Senior Isaac Kim followed by lofting a short looper over the pitcher's mound. The ball had so much backspin that it bounced away from a charging Peña right when it hit the dirt. Freshman Aidan Schraeder walked to load the bases, and Rosenfeld gave Flintridge Prep its first lead of the game, 10-9, with a sacrifice fly to right field.

"All year we've just been battling back, battling back, and we've got a good group of guys, and we just have faith in our offense," said Pilar.

Salesian didn't make things easy

in the top of the seventh, however. After the first two batters grounded out, Geovanni Islas singled and Peña walked. A wild pitch moved both of them into scoring position, but Leslie caught Ricardo Melero looking at a fastball on the outside corner for strike three to end the game.

"Robbie just came and shut the door," said Gonzalez. "That's what he's been doing every year for us. We told him before we went out, 'This is your moment right here,' and he lived up to it."

The Rebels — who lost their first seven games of the season and were not league champions — celebrated their historic accomplishment on the field between the mound and first base, using water bottles to splash each other in the jubilant scrum.

"It feels great. We really shot down the naysayers this year," said Pan, who included himself in that group. "... I didn't think we were ready. We're young, but we can't keep throwing that around, man. We've played a whole season of baseball together and this is what it's all about. The whole season, every game, the 0-7 start, and the comeback of the second place in league — it prepared us mentally for this. These guys have heart. These guys never give up, and that's why I get out on the field and end with them."

Flintridge Prep advanced to its first CIF Final since 1951, when the team lost to Oxnard Santa Clara High School, 13-3. More than half a century later, these Rebels are hoping to etch their names into school history with one more victory.

"It means the world," said Pilar. "Flintridge Prep's seen all kinds of success in other sports — basketball,

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La Cañada Baseball Softball Association Game Results

BASEBALL

Pinto Division

Diamondbacks 11, Brewers 6 — The Diamondbacks advanced with a hard-fought playoff win against the talented and never-say-die Brewers. The D-backs jumped out to an early seven-run lead, but the Brewers wouldn't quit. Once again the Diamondbacks got great pitching performances from Tyler Breckheimer and Gregory Panosian, both of whom threw a shutout inning striking out the side. At the plate, Breckheimer was a beast (3-for-3 with a triple, a booming home run and three runs). Vince Ferr was clutch in the leadoff role, reaching base all three at-bats (2-for-2, two runs scored). Charlie Simonian pitched in with a perfect 3-for-3 day, driving in a couple of big two-out runs. Ryan Callahan was 2-for-3. Phillip Cann, Finn Bradley, Christian Wilder and Christopher Patrosian all pitched in with hits. The Diamondbacks are now on a collision course for a semifinal clash with the powerful Phillies.

Phillies 13, Diamondbacks 6 — The championship-bound Phillies pulled out an incredible win against a great Diamondbacks team. The Phillies and D-backs split the series as the D-backs beat the Phillies during the regular season. This was a great defensive battle by both teams. The Phillies are happy not to have to bat against the D-backs' Tyler Breckheimer and Gregory Panosian. They are fantastic pitchers. The Phillies pitchers were equal to the task as Trevor Rusch struck out three and only gave up one run. Gavin Franklin pitched the second inning giving up no hits or runs. Heading into the third inning, the Phillies were leading 6-1. The Phillies had another good game at the plate with 16 hits in five innings scoring 13 runs with home runs by Jakob Kim, Gavin Franklin, Trevor Rusch, and Jake Olivarez (his first of the season). Jakob and Gavin both had perfect games at the plate going 3-for-3. Some exceptional plays in the field contributed to the win. Gavin, Jakob, and Trevor all made great plays in the field. The play of the game goes to Trevor Rusch when trying to field a hard

hit line drive at shortstop, the ball popped out of his glove and he still had the composure to pick it up and throw a perfect strike to Jakob at first in time for the out.

Nationals 15, Phillies 14 — The Story has been written: The Nationals scored six runs in the bottom of the sixth to come from behind and defeat the Phillies in the championship game, 15-14. The Phillies had a great year and really played their hearts out, but two consecutive nights six-inning baseball was just too much for the boys. Both teams played great on the field and in the batter's box. The Phillies jumped out to an early lead when Jakob Kim led off with a double, followed by a single by Logan Wong and Gavin Franklin to load the bases. Trevor Rusch, hitting clean-up, hit a three-run triple. With two outs, Alexander Abramian hit a double to score Trevor. Trevor Rusch took the mound and immediately made an impact fielding a grounder and making the throw to Gavin at first base. Trevor struck out two of the next three batters ending the first inning with the Phillies up, 4-0. The Nationals responded with

great pitching in the second, striking out the side. Gavin Franklin pitched the second striking out three of four batters with no runs. The Phillies scored five runs in the top of the third with hits by Jakob Kim (triple), Logan Wong (triple), Gavin (single), Trevor (single), Parker Weightman (double) and culminated with Spencer Saenz first home run of the season. The Nationals got on the board in the bottom of the third with two runs and the Phillies leading 9-2. Again, the Nationals fought back shutting the Phillies down and scoring five runs in the fourth closing the Phillies lead to 9-7. The Phillies responded again with 5 runs in the top of the 5th with hits by Jakob (single), Logan W (single), Gavin (double), Trevor (single), Parker (single) and a double by Alexander. Good defense by the Phillies held the Nationals to just two runs and a 14-9 lead going into the sixth and final inning. But the Nationals stepped up making two great infield plays and holding the Phillies to no runs. The bottom of the sixth, with darkness looming and tensions high, saw the Nationals shine as their top of the order produced

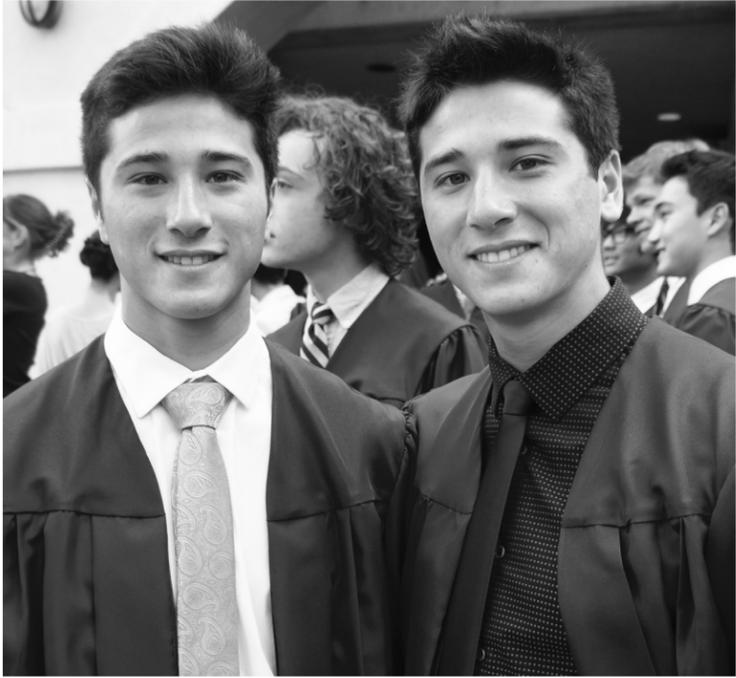
when needed the most. Hits by their first seven batters sent six Nationals across the plate and ended the game. The Phillies played a fantastic game and were beaten by the better team on that Tuesday night. The Phillies played a great season and proved to be a great team that deserved to be in the championship game.

Mustang Division

Rockies 9, Diamondbacks 4 — The Rockies were fortunate to pull out a win against a great Diamondbacks team. Both teams played great defense and were swinging the bats. The Rockies' performance started with great pitching by Chase Engstrom, Zach Alvarez and Matthew Plocher. But it was the defense that earned the spotlight in tonight's game. A couple of highlights: Nick Tea played in left field chased down a ball near the fence, made a throw to the cut-off man Chase Engstrom, who then made a perfect throw to Nick Ferry at home for a tag out at home plate. It was likely one of

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Weiss Takes Home Masters Title



Gareth and Barrett Weiss of Flintridge Prep qualified for the CIF State Meet in the pole vault competition. Barrett won the Masters titles by clearing 16 feet.

Three local athletes recently competed in the CIF-Southern Section Masters Meet in Cerritos College to qualify for the CIF State Meet.

Flintridge Prep's Barrett Weiss captured the Masters title in the pole vault by clearing 16 feet for the first time in his career. He achieved the personal record on a jump-off against Jett Gordon of Huntington Beach Marina High. After both athletes missed at 16 feet, 3 inches, the bar was lowered three inches and Weiss cleared his personal best to win the championship.

Prep's Gareth Weiss cleared 15 feet, 3 inches in the pole vault competition to join his twin brother at the State Meet at Buchanan High in Clovis.

Jasher Foster of St. Francis, who captured the CIF-SS Division 3 title, recorded a personal best in the 110-meter hurdles with a time of 14.27. He was well within the qualifying time for State.

PREP

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volleyball did a great job this year — and then we [can] finally put baseball on the map. It's a good feeling."

Awaiting the Rebels in the championship this weekend is Long Beach St. Anthony High School from the Santa Fe League. The Saints (18-10 overall record) defeated Prep League champion Pasadena Polytechnic en route to the pinnacle matchup of Division 6. First pitch at the Riverside Sports Complex is scheduled for Saturday, June 6, at 4 p.m.

■ CIF Softball Playoffs

FSHA Ousted from Playoffs

The Flintridge Sacred Heart varsity softball team was unable to make up for early mistakes in a 6-1 loss to host Garden Grove in the CIF-Southern Section Division 5 quarterfinals last week.

The Tologs were plagued by errors early in the game, which led to four unearned runs in the first three innings of play. The Tologs attempted to rally in the top of the

seventh but mustered only one run.

Aprylle Salvador drove in the lone run scored by Kaitlin Powers and Olivia Fitzpatrick collected two hits.

FSHA ace Hannah Zika allowed six runs (two earned) on six hits and two walks in six innings of work.

The Tologs (15-10 overall) finished second in the Sunshine League with a 5-2 record.

LCBSA

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the key moments in the game. The Rockies had yet another double play when Charlie Goodwin caught a line drive at second and quickly made the throw to Zach Alvarez at first catching the runner before he could get back to the base. Other defensive plays were made by Ryan Franklin, Macky, Zach and John Goodwin. The defense won the game and the bats were a solid supporting cast. Hits by Ryan (triple, two singles), Charlie (two singles), John (triple, two singles), Chase (double, single), Macky (double, single), Zach (double, single), Connor Weightman (single), Conner Pao (three singles) and Nick Ferry (single) all contributed to scoring nine runs. The BioHealth Nutrition Diamondbacks lost for just the second time, bowing out in the semifinals of the Mustang 9 baseball playoffs with a 9-4 defeat against the Northwestern Mutual Rockies. Diamondbacks hitters struggled from the outset, managing a mere seven hits over six innings of play. Dustin Harzmann reached base safely in his three plate appearances for the Diamondbacks, scoring the team's first run on a second-inning infield grounder by Demetrios Vasiliou and driving in two runs with a single up the middle an inning later. David Ibarra singled twice and walked against the Rockies, and William Jensen drove a third-inning double into left field for the team's lone extra-base hit of the game. Despite their offensive woes, several Diamondbacks players turned in noteworthy efforts with their gloves. Emerson Min delivered his best defensive performance of the season, accounting for a pair of unassisted putouts at third base and an assist at second base. Shortstop Grant Barton teamed up with

first baseman Harzmann for a 6-3 putout in both the first and third innings, and in between, Harzmann assisted Barton on a 5-3 putout to end the second inning. Barton also continued his dominant pitching, holding Rockies batters to one run over two innings while racking up four strikeouts. Barton (first base), Jensen (third base), and Ty Harlan (shortstop) each tallied an unassisted putout in the loss as well.

Dodgers 9, Diamondbacks 4 — The BioHealth Diamondbacks suffered their first defeat in Mustang 9 baseball when they dropped a rematch with the Center BMW Dodgers, 9-4. Diamondbacks hitters mustered just seven hits against the Dodgers, leading to their worst offensive output of the season. Three of those hits, including a run-scoring triple to right field, came off the bat of Ty Harlan, who also pitched two scoreless frames to start the game, striking out two batters and teaming with first baseman Dustin Harzmann for a pair of 1-3 putouts in the first inning. Emerson Min reached base safely in each of his three plate appearances, knocking in the first run for the Diamondbacks (5-1-2) with a second-inning single to centerfield. David Ibarra tripled for the second consecutive game and scored twice in the loss. Defensively, Grant Barton was a standout, collecting two assists at shortstop in the second inning, and he later tossed an inning of one-run ball against the Dodgers (5-1-2), recording a strikeout as well as his third assist of the game. Harzmann finished up with three putouts at first base and added four strikeouts and an assist in two innings of pitching, and Demetrios Vasiliou notched his first putout of the season on a 6-4 force play in the second inning.

Diamondbacks 11, Marlins 7 — Benjamin Kim's bases-clearing

double to center field punctuated a tide-turning inning for the BioHealth Nutrition Diamondbacks, who knocked off the La Canada Sport Clips Marlins, 11-7, in the quarterfinals of the Mustang 9 baseball playoffs. After scoring just one run in each of the game's first three innings, the Diamondbacks offense finally erupted with a five-run fourth inning and put away the Marlins for good with three additional runs in the following frame. Kim walked and singled in his other plate appearances, leading all Diamondbacks hitters with four runs batted in. David Ibarra (2-for-4) accounted for three RBIs on a pair of singles, and Ty Harlan (1-for-3) doubled, scored twice, and added a couple of RBIs as well. Bradley Burns, William Jensen, and Emerson Min each scored two runs for the Diamondbacks, and Alexander Arrobio picked up a pair of singles and a run scored. Ibarra also looked strong on the mound, allowing but one run in each of his two innings as he fanned three batters and twice assisted on 1-3 putouts. Grant Barton then finished off the Marlins, retiring six straight batters on a pop-up, two grounders, and a trio of strikeouts. Defensive standouts for the Diamondbacks included Dustin Harzmann, who recorded three putouts (one unassisted) as first baseman, and Harlan, who caught a pair of pop flies. Barton (first base) and Jensen (third base) contributed an unassisted putout apiece for the victorious Diamondbacks. In intense playoff action, the Marlins and D-backs played a seesaw game. The Marlins strong effort was not enough against the comeback kids. For the Marlins, Alex Beverido and Benjamin Yim played well. Christopher Bowers used his strong throwing arm to throw a runner out from deep left field to hold us close to the D-Backs.

Zerbel Named LCHS Football Coach

La Cañada High School announced that LCHS 7/8 Principal Ryan Zerbel will leave his position to coach the varsity football team at the high school and teach physical education. He succeeds Ramsey Lambert, who recently accepted a head coaching position at Santa Monica High School after guiding the Spartans to a 7-4 record in the fall. Zerbel is the fifth football coach at La Cañada since 2008. See full story on page 1.



LCF's Baffert Takes Run at Triple Crown Saturday

Fans will find out Saturday whether Bob Baffert's smooth-striding speedster American Pharoah can capture horse racing's first Triple Crown since 1978.

American Pharoah's run at history at the Belmont Stakes will be broadcast live on NBC and streamed live on NBC Sports Lives Extra. Post time is approximately 3:50 p.m.

Baffert, the acclaimed trainer who resides in La Cañada Flintridge, is on the cusp of a Triple Crown sweep for the fourth time. He just missed it with Silver Charm in 1997, Real Quiet in '98 and with War Emblem in 2002.

But American Pharoah might be his best horse yet.

On May 16, on a soggy, sloppy track at the Preakness Stakes, the colt cruised to victory by seven lengths.

That was after pulling away down the stretch in warmer, drier conditions May 2 at the Kentucky Derby, where Baffert claimed his fourth career victory at Churchill Downs.

For all of his talent, American Pharoah will be the only horse in the field in New York this weekend making his third start in five weeks at three tracks over three distances. Only one of the nine other horses expected to run Saturday, Tale of Verve, also ran at the Preakness.

Baffert acknowledged the challenge at a news conference following the Preakness victory.

"It's going to be tough," he said. "I know everybody right now is sharpening their knives getting ready."

— Mirjam Swanson

to the D-backs dugout and make an incredible diving catch to swing the momentum back for the Marlins. The umpire called it the best play he has ever seen.

Bronco Division

Phillies 15, Orioles 14 — In this offensive slugfest, the Phillies got off to an early 7-3 lead. By the end of four, the Orioles had clawed back to within two. Both teams added points and after six the Phillies held a one run lead. In the decisive seventh inning, both teams added two runs and the Phillies squeezed out a narrow victory.

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