

Seraphs' Number Comes Up One

By TONY JOSEPH

Of the 146 boys enrolled at St. Bonaventure High School in Ventura, nine of them play the best game of baseball in the Class AA division of the CIF, and one of them plays as good a game as you'll see on any high school diamond.

At least that was the verdict handed down at the Ventura College diamond yesterday, and neither the standing-room-only crowd, the scoreboard or the team from Bloomington that came almost 200 miles in hopes of winning its first-ever CIF title, could argue the point.

The Seraphs, led by Jerry Stone, or "Rocky" as his teammates call him, wrote another chapter in their brief but incredibly successful sports history by winning their second CIF championship, and first baseball crown with a 3-0 victory over the Bruins. The victory came just 18 months after the school had brought Ventura its first outright CIF football title, and only six months after it had lost to Santa Ynez trying to win a second football crown.

There may not have been the drama yesterday that there was when St. Bonaventure won the football trophy, but there certainly wasn't the disappointment Seraph players and rooters felt last December at Santa Ynez. Stone, who pitched his team to CIF victories over Arroyo Grande and Temple City during a busy week, came off two days rest and was tougher than ever on the Bruins, who score runs in the double figures most days.

Stone was not as fast as he's been, but he was still smart. Mixing up his pitches with the savvy of a big-leaguer, Stone induced 10 Bruin batters to strike out, surrendered only one walk, and gave up only four singles to the team that brought an 18-4 record coming into the game.

And Stone had a most worthy opponent on the mound in Bloomington pitcher Dave Love, who appeared invincible until Stone came within a yard of hitting one out of the park in the sixth inning.

baseman out of his way and the ball into the dugout.

And that was about all the fireworks the Seraphs were able to make. The Bruins made plenty of them, but Seraph fielding and Stone's ability to strike people out in key situations kept everything cool for the winners.

"We played for one break," said Seraphs Coach Bill Little after the game. "One of the teams had to crack sooner or later. Our's never did," he added.

The Seraphs don't make errors very often, and they've spent most of the playoffs concentrating on not making mistakes. But the most impressive

play came in the sixth inning after Love had stroked a one-out single up the middle. Leadoff batter John Pacheco then bounced one at Seraph third baseman Angel Alamillo, who tossed to second baseman Ron Romo for one out, with the ball relayed to first baseman Mike McLean for another and an inning-ending double play.

That the Seraphs were not in the mood to give away any runs was obvious in the second inning. Ray Fernandez the Bruins' cleanup hitter, walked on a full-count pitch, and after one out, John Moncrief singled along the first base line, sending Fernandez to third

base. Stone got the next batter on strikes, and then turned in the final out when Moncrief took off for second base. Stone faked a throw there, and instead threw to third to pick off Fernandez.

That seemed to take some of the zip away from the Bruins, who went down in order the next three innings, before having a potential rally killed by the double play.

"My curve ball was going real good and I felt fine," a grinning Stone said after the game.

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Love and R. Fernandez;
Stone and Stephenson.

After a three-inning pitching duel, where flawless fielding on both sides kept the game scoreless, the Seraphs got the break that they had played for. Ron Romo grounded a ball through the left side of the infield to lead off matters after nine Seraphs in a row had made out.

Vince O'Neill then bunted Romo along to second base. Love bore down and fanned Stone on three pitches, but Stephenson grounded the ball to short. The shortstop, possibly feeling the pressure of the stakes, threw the ball away and Romo trotted in with a run. It seemed the Seraphs would never be able to get off the lanky Love.

The rally in the sixth inning, which netted the Seraphs a pair of insurance runs, proved that Love was only human and also gave Stone a little breathing room. That rally started after two were out. O'Neill grounded one to third that was booted for the Bruins' second error, and then he stole second. Stone picked on a curve ball and rammed it to the fence to bring in O'Neill.

Stone's batterymate Mark Stephenson then whacked one in the same spot, just far enough to clear the outfielder's head for a double to score Stone. Stephenson looked like a dead duck trying for third base on the play, but he came alive again and knocked the third

Hang Tough Win



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pressive hitting team, took a 3-0 lead into the sixth inning. But the Cougars took the first step toward victory by scoring one run on a single by Al Chavez and a line drive double over the left-fielder's head by Duane Roberts.

Roberts was left at second, but it didn't matter as VHS had

off single in the first were the only hits off Buskirk until he was pulled after Chavez' second hit and Roberts' double in the sixth.

Wilson chased Flores in the fourth on a bunt single by John Hund, a single by Chuck Ross and then a two-run base hit by Buskirk. The Bruins made it 2-