

GAME 7 – San Joaquin Delta College Mustangs 4, Ohlone College Renegades 1

BAKERSFIELD – It took 59 years and one name change, but the San Joaquin Delta College Mustangs have returned to the top of the California Community College mountain.

Facing a must-win situation from the moment they entered the ballpark, the Mustangs pulled off the doubleheader sweep over the Ohlone College Renegades, 5-3 in the opener and 4-1 in the title-clinching game on Sunday at Bakersfield College's Gerry Collis Field.

It's the first state baseball title for Delta (35-12) since 1959, when the school was called Stockton Junior College.

Like most Game 7 match-ups, a pair of seldom-used pitchers took to the mound for each school and in the end, it was the left arm of Final Four MVP Jeff McKenzie that proved to be the difference. The normally-used centerfielder who came into the title game with just five innings of work the entire season, threw a complete-game masterpiece for Delta, allowing one run (unearned) on seven hits with three walks and seven strikeouts. When runners DID get on base, McKenzie helped his own cause by picking off four runners throughout the game.

It was the second time in three years that a title game was won by a pitcher for his first victory of the season, as McKenzie (1-0) joined Orange Coast College's Josh Lee (2009), who won his lone game against this same Mustang program.

After a pair of scoreless innings for both teams, the Mustangs grabbed hold of the lead in the top half of the third inning when Jordan Louie doubled to left, advanced to third on a bunt single by Erik Kozel, and scored on a double-play grounder by Ricky Acosta.

The lead grew to 2-0 in the fifth when Steven Patterson singled to center, advanced to second on a sacrifice bunt by Louie, went to third on a fly ball to right by Kozel and scored on a sun-aided single to right off the bat of Acosta.

Ohlone (28-19) chipped into the deficit when Christian Weeber led off the fifth with an infield single and advanced to second on a throwing error. Two batters later, Joel Thys (2-for-3) came through with a two-out, RBI-single to center, scoring Weeber to make it 2-1.

Delta picked up some much-needed insurance in the top of the seventh, using three straight hits from Acosta (2-for-5), Langston Calhoun (4-for-5) and Josh Grijalva (1-for-5) to extend the lead to 3-1 against hard-luck lefty Michael Rogers (0-4). Rogers threw well, allowing just three earned runs over 6 2/3 innings, walking none and striking out one.

Ohlone – last year’s state champion -- had its best opportunity to get even in the bottom of the eighth when a pair of two-out singles by Matt Chaidez and Ryan Tella put the tying runs on base, but McKenzie coaxed a harmless pop fly to himself to end the threat.

From there, the Renegades notched the knockout blow in the ninth when Louie led off with a single to center, advanced to second on a sacrifice bunt by Kozel, went to third on a ground out by Acosta and scored on an infield single up the middle by Calhoun.

Calhoun, who entered the Final Four with just 12 hits in 50 at-bats, finished the weekend series by hitting .600 (9-15) with five runs scored and eight RBI.

GAME NOTES -- For just the third time in State Final Four history, it was a North-North matchup for the state title. Last year, Ohlone defeated the College of San Mateo and back in 1992, Fresno City College defeated Sacramento City College.