

Pride 18s get first tourney title

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Kevin Kilhoffer [Buy this photo](#)
Mattoon Pride's Amber Shedelbower delivers a pitch against Indiana Outkast in 18-and-under softball in Mattoon, Ill., on Sunday, July 18, 2010. (Journal Gazette/ Times-Courier, Kevin Kilhoffer)

By BRIAN NIELSEN

Sports Editor

MATTOON - Quietly, Monica Rondon was second-guessing her coach Mike Dow.

"He gave me the hit-and-run," the Mattoon Pride player said. "I thought 'why is he giving me the hit-and-run? I've struck out twice.' "

Rondon was glad her coach knew best.

Not only did she connect on the pitch, the Pride's two bases runners could trot home on the home run over the right field fence turning a nervous one-run edge in the sixth inning into a cushion that stood for Sunday's 4-0 championship game win over the Outkast of Bloomington, Ind., in Mattoon Bagelfest softball 18-and-under tournament.

"It was a big relief," said Pride pitcher Alison Kimble, who completed a four-hit shutout in the title game. "It helped me relax. I wasn't so on edge."

Throwing her second shutout of the weekend - the other shared with Megan DeWerff in a five-inning Saturday rout - Kimble might have had reason to be nervous throughout.

"I had yet to pitch in an 18U championship game since I'm the baby on the team," said Kimble, who is going to be a senior at Cumberland but this summer is playing on a team full of high school graduates and preparing for college.

Even for the Western Illinois recruit Rondon, her homer helping cap the Pride's 5-0 showing in this double-elimination tournament was no routine deal.

"I've never won a championship," the All-Big 12 Conference player from Champaign Central said.

This season neither had this year's Pride 18s, who are now 27-4 but had to settle for a couple of runner-up tournament finishes when championship games were rained out and Mattoon lost tie-breakers.

The home tourney played at Lake Land College on Saturday and Roundhouse Complex on Sunday had no such problems as the Mattoon-based team outscored its opponents in the five games by a combined 40-6.

"It was a great weekend for the girls," Dow said. "Great pitching. I can't say enough about Amber (Shedelbower) and Ali."

Shedelbower pitched three of the five wins including a four-hitter in an 8-2 win earlier Sunday against the Outkast, which then came back through losers' bracket games to get another shot at the Pride.

The rematch - the second of what could have been three meetings had the Outkast forced the if-necessary finale - was much closer.

Michelle Glenn led off the game with a triple and scored on Casey Sowers' ground ball for the only run of the game until the sixth inning.

Kellye Kohn had a one-out single and Sowers a two-out single putting runners on first and third and bringing up Rondon, who had gone 7-for-10 in the her first four Bagelfest games but struck out in her first two at-bats of this one.

"I was pretty heated after two strikeouts," Rondon said. "Groundouts OK maybe, but strikeouts I get flamed."

Clutch time was different.

"I was thinking too much so I just cleared my head," Rondon said.

Then she cleared the bases providing the four-run lead. Kimble finished her shutout that included three strikeouts and one walk

"It was a good tournament by everyone," Kimble said. "I owe a lot to my defense.

Kimble also had three hits in the title game.

"It's good to win because it was in front of our fans at home," she said.

This is probably the kind of thing Rondon had in mind when joining the Pride this year.

"I knew Rachel (Bishop) and the Pride is a well-known team," the Champaign Central product said. "It's good competition."

Now the Pride is gearing for stiffer competition at the NSA national 18U tournament scheduled to start July 28 at Chattanooga, Tenn.

First game

Cl Crush 000 00 - 0

Pride 303 12 - 8

Winning pitcher: Amber Shedelbower (11-3) 4 innings, 1 hit, 0 runs, 2 walks, 3 strikeouts.

Pride: Casey Sowers 2-for-3, RBI; Monica Rondon 2-for-3; Baileigh Basham 1-for-1, RBI; Macy Shupe 1-for-2, RBI; Megan DeWerff 1-for-2; Amber Shedelbower 1-for-2; Alison Kimble RBI.

Second game

Pride 401 34 - 12

TNT Twisters 000 00 - 0

Winning pitcher: Kimble (10-1) 4 innings, 2 hits, 0 runs, 0 walks, 2 strikeouts. Relief: DeWerff 1 innings, 0 hits, 0 runs, 2 walks, 3 strikeouts.

Pride: Glenn 2-for-3, triple; Sowers 1-for-3; Rondon 3-for-3, 2 RBIs; Basham 1-for-3, 3 RBI; Kristen Winkler 1-for-2, RBI; DeWerff 1-for-3; Kimble 2-for-3, double, 2 RBIs; Shedelbower 1-for-3; Rachel Bishop 1-for-1; McKenzie Miles, 1-for-2, RBI

Third game

MoJo 020 20 - 4

Pride 710 0x - 8

Winning pitcher: Shedelbower (12-3) 5 innings, 6 hits, 4 runs, 3 earned runs, 0 walks, 2 strikeouts.

Pride: Sowers 1-for-3; Rondon 1-for-3; Basham 1-for-1, 2 RBIs; Shupe RBI; Winkler 1-for-1; Kimble 1-for-2, RBI; Shedelbower 1-for-2, RBI; Bishop 1-for-2, double, RBI

Fourth game

Pride 300 000 1 4 - 8

Outkast 000 002 0 - 2

Winning pitcher: Shedelbower (13-3) 7 innings, 4 hits, 2 earned runs, 1 walk, 3 strikeouts.

Pride: Sowers 1-for-3; Rondon 2-for-3, 2 RBIs; Basham 1-for-3; Kimble 1-for-2

Championship game

Pride 100 003 0 - 4-8-1

Outkast 000 000 0 - 0-4-1

Winning pitcher: Kimble (11-1) 7 innings, 4 hits, 0 runs, 3 strikeouts, 1 walk

Pride: Michelle Glenn 2-for-3, triple; Casey Sowers 1-for-3, RBI; Monica Rondon 1-for-3, home run, 3 RBIs; Baileigh Basham 1-for-3; Alison Kimble 3-for-3, double;; Kellye Kohn 1-for-2

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