

DeKalb – Regional Game

The truth is that DeKalb put it to Northridge in there two previous meeting in 1988. The two games were not really close contests. DeKalb was superior. They had a team made of experienced high school softball players. They had a tradition of being a regional power. They did not take losing lightly. They has a tradition of winning in the playoffs and they weren't going to let Northridge stand in their way. They are planning to go to state finals and perform well. This game is a stepping stone to get them to where they want to be. They are ready. Besides, Northridge hasn't even been to the regionals before. Not even once in the school's history. The DeKalb coach worked to keep the team from being overconfident, however they were highly favored to win. Now they just had to go get the job done.

They are facing Northridge for the third time this year. It is a big deal. It is a Regional game. Both teams won their Sectional titles and now both teams want to advance further. Will DeKalb play up to the same level as before and dominate Northridge? Or will the old adage hold true for high school sports? That adage of it is very difficult to beat the same opponent three times in a season.

Yet there is a little known ingredient in the recipe of DeKalb's doubleheader sweep over Northridge. The day of the doubleheader, it was choir contest day and several of the Northridge starters were missing as they had gone to choir contest. Now Northridge was bringing their full arsenal.

Added to that there was yet another arrow, a majestic arrow, in Northridge's quiver that DeKalb was about to discover. Annette had been working relentlessly on her change up. Now she has refined it. She can hurl it in the strike zone at will. It is a very deceiving pitch as she has mastered throwing it with the same leg drive and arm speed as her highly rated heater. The only

difference between the two pitches is the release of the pitch which changes the speed substantially. It will prove a viable weapon in keeping batters off guard and guessing what is coming.

Northridge knew they would have to illicit their most concerted abilities for all seven innings. Not giving into the psychologically of knowing that they lost twice to the Barons. The players cannot put the memories of the losses totally behind them. But they have Coach Willig who is prepared to inspire them into playing as they had throughout the sectionals. He will tell them that if they continue that play they can defeat DeKalb. He reminds them that this time we are playing with our full team. We will give them our best team to face and he tells them they can prevail!

Will the players be supremely inspired by Coach Willig and play up to their potential? The results will come at the end of the bottom of the seventh inning.

Could this prove to be a chance to make a statement for Raider girl's high school softball? Was there a resolve, a confidence the team could obtain from their last games and also from the pronouncements by Coach Willig, He was emphatic that are a different team than when they previously faced DeKalb.

Annette sits listening to Coach. He makes sense. They are different. The regular starting team will be defending behind her. She leans into the thought that the team is really playing superior ball. Far beyond how they played at the start of the season. The team has some confidence and believes they have become a superior team.

Annette feels confident in her approach to the game. Somehow she knew there was more than just a chance they might get revenge on DeKalb and win that game.

As she strides to the mound and the rest of the team trots to their positions, there is a bit more than a spattering of clapping and cheering from the Raider fans. The applause and cheers almost sounded like a confidence was building in the stands too.