



Pitcher's no-hitter leads Avon past Ben Davis

By Kevin Leibrock

— INDIANAPOLIS — Avon pitcher Jenny Esparza knew she had some big shoes to fill.

Going into the season, the Lady Orioles lost two-time all-state pitcher Jennifer Chasteen to graduation and were looking to the squad's younger pitchers to fill the void.

Esparza proved again on Friday at Ben Davis that she is up to the challenge, throwing her third career no-hitter as Avon blanked the Lady Giants 12-0.

The sophomore pitcher recorded 18 strikeouts and between the second and fourth innings sat down seven batters in a row. Esparza has thrown 70 strikeouts for the Lady Orioles (4-1) in five games.

"I've really been working on my riseball a lot," Esparza said. "I've worked on hitting locations and just getting focused up there."

Esparza was effective at the plate as well as on the mound as she went 3-for-4 with two runs batted in.

"Jenny Esparza had an awesome game," said Avon coach Jenny Shayotovich. "She's been solid."

Avon wasted no time getting its offense going. The first four Lady Oriole batters got on base and Esparza brought in outfielder Lizzie Campbell with a single to right field that gave Avon a 1-0 first-inning lead.

Avon took control of the game in the fourth inning when sophomore shortstop Holly Wasmund smacked a grounder to right field, bringing senior third baseman Melissa Smith home.

Two batters later, senior first baseman Chelsea Holsinger gave the Lady Orioles a 4-0 lead as she doubled on a line drive to right field that scored Wasmund and sophomore catcher Helen Rogers.

"We took care of business on defense when we had to and we hit well tonight," Shayotovich said. "We put the bat on the ball and we know we're a strong hitting team. I felt like we strung some things together and everyone got to contribute. That makes it fun as a team."

The pace of the game then quickened as Esparza struck out all three Ben Davis batters in the third inning and did it again in the fourth.

Nearly the entire Avon lineup batted in the sixth inning. Senior second baseman Jamie Keltz picked up two RBI on a double to deep center field and the next batter, Esparza, recorded her second RBI on a nearly identical blast to center field.

It was a frustrating evening for the Lady Giants, who were held to no hits and committed four errors. First baseman Brittany Collyear was the only baserunner for the Ben Davis — she walked in the bottom of the second inning.

Freshman pitcher Sydney West threw four strikeouts for the Lady Giants (1-4).

"They are a very good team," said Ben Davis coach Bruce Poindexter. "We weren't up to our standards. We're a better hitting team than that and it didn't show, and we worked a lot harder than it showed tonight."

Both teams have a busy schedule coming up. Avon plays Mooresville at home on tonight. Ben Davis hosts North Central on Tuesday before traveling to Brownsburg on Wednesday.

"We have seven games next week and not enough time to practice and make up for our mistakes, so hopefully we'll get our mental attitude and everything together and come back to play," Poindexter said.

Both teams will be competing in the Ben Davis Spring Softball Classic, starting Friday.

"Next week is a huge week for us," Shayotovich said. "It will be a huge test for us as a team and what we're really ready for, so we'll have some great tests, get some great competition, and we'll hopefully get better — that's our goal."