

2024 JESSICA COOK WOOD BAT TOURNAMENT

COOKED

Despite the fall equinox ushering in the Autumn season Sunday morning, the scorching temperatures made it feel like peak summer as the 88s set out to write another chapter into their epic story.

DAY 1 - POD PATROL

Even though first pitch wasn't until 11:00, their bats slept through the alarm clock and forced the 88s to lean especially hard on their stalwart defense to get their tournament off to a winning start.

Playing short with 3 fielders on C1 did little to impact the outcome thanks to Joce, Myles and Vern locking things down on the grass, the Nate-nie / Lambert connection on the corners holding down the infield and Jeff pitching a gem on the mound.

Bolstered by reinforcements in games 2 (Jordan, Noelle, Cindy) and 3 (Dan), the 88s rounded out a 3-0 day to finish on top of their pod and earned themselves a spot in the platinum division on Sunday.

Game 2 was an 11-0 shutout thanks in part to Jordan and Myles combining to bat 8/8 and Cindy doing her thing on the mound. Nikki's hot bat (3/3 + 2 runs + 2 RBI) was considered a fire risk so it was pulled in favor of Linda getting a chance which she used to set up the teams 11th and final run of the game.

Game 3 could have turned out differently had it been played on a bigger field since the Tribe hit 2 out of Plymouth which by rule were considered outs. Sometimes luck helps, but they were also plenty good with Marnie knocking 3 hits + run + RBI and Noelle making several superstar plays at 2B including an impressive turn for a double play to help cap their day with an 8-3 sunset win.

DAY 2 - SUNDAY FUNDAY

8:00 am came early but there were no alarm clock malfunctions this time.

After missing out on Saturday, John joined the squad Sunday and proved he still knows how to handle his wood by starting the day with a perfect 3/3 performance and an impressive debut at 2B.

With every lady getting at least 2 hits, the 88s were able to roll out of bed with a 9-2 start.

Game 2 gave them a scare.

After finishing on top of their pod on Saturday, the Wrecking Balls were looking like the Cinderella team of the tournament after also winning their first Sunday game and pushing the 88s in the quarterfinals.

After a lead off inside the park home run from Lucas gave the 88s a flashy start, the Wrecking Balls were able to pull to within 1 run in the 5th, forcing the 88s to find another gear.

Thanks to big time contributions from Nate (4/4 + 3 runs + 2 RBI), Vern (2 hits, 3 runs, RBI), John (5/5 + 3 runs + 3 RBI) and Joce (2 hits, 2 runs, 3 RBI), the 88s were able to pull away late with 9 runs over their final 2 innings to finish with a somewhat misleading 17-7 final.

The semi-finals once again saw the 88s dealing with a slow start and a 2-1 deficit in the 3rd inning.

Not wanting their day to end yet, Myles' third inning multi-run saving catch deep in CF on defense followed by an inside the parker on offense helped turn the tide.

They scored 11 runs over the last 4 innings, including a 5 run 7th to put the game away, all fueled by 4 hits from Vern and Lucas, 3 RBI from Jeff and more incredible pitching from Jes.

When they're clicking as well as they were this weekend, not even a supercharged Thunder team playing with one of the 88s best guys was able to pose much of a threat.

After getting down 1-0 in the first, the 88s piled on 10 runs over the next 3 innings and finished up a touchdown to capture their 3rd Platinum crown at Jessica Cook with a 14-7 final.

MVP SPOTLIGHT

It takes a lot to stand out in this 88s crowd, especially when they're firing on all cylinders.

However when you lead the team in both runs (13) and RBI (10, tied with Jeff) all while playing the OF with a sore throwing arm and batting leadoff the majority of the weekend you get your name in lights:

LUCAS RIOUX. Aka Glide.

If the 88s were a weapon, Lucas was the tip of the spear. The blade of the knife.

Highlighted by his heroic 5/5 + HR + 3 run + 3 RBI quarter final game which played a major role in saving them from an early exit, Lucas was a pivotal player all weekend long and deserves the flowers.

After 7 hard fought victories in the baking sun, the 88s were indeed cooked.

#WorthIt

EXTRA BITS

- Myles and Nate were the only members of the tourney's K club with embarrassing whiffs.
- Between game splash padding is now a thing.
- Myles broke the record for hot dogs consumed Saturday night (10).
- Marnie's incredible willy mays style catch behind 1B in the finals.
- Jeff scored the tying run in the Men's platinum final about an hour later.