

Press Clippings - 5/10/2023

– Grammys –

212 Quarterfinalists Announced for the 2024 Music Educator Award

May 8, 2023

By John Ochoa

Today, the Recording Academy and GRAMMY Museum have announced a total of 212 music teachers as quarterfinalists for the 2024 Music Educator Award, which recognizes current educators — kindergarten through college across public and private schools — who have made a significant and lasting contribution to the field of music education and who demonstrate a commitment to the broader cause of maintaining music education in the schools. The quarterfinalists, who hail from 197 cities, were selected from more than 2,000 initial submitted nominations. In addition to the quarterfinalists, 123 legacy applicants from 2023 will also be eligible to win the Music Educator Award this year.

Semi-finalists for the 2024 Music Educator Award will be announced this September. The ultimate recipient will be recognized during GRAMMY Week 2024.

A joint partnership and presentation between [the Recording Academy](#) and [GRAMMY Museum](#), the Music Educator Award is open to current U.S. music teachers, and anyone can nominate a teacher — students, parents, friends, colleagues, community members, school deans, and administrators. Teachers are also able to nominate themselves, and nominated teachers are notified and invited to fill out an application.

Each year, one recipient is selected from 10 finalists and recognized for their remarkable impact on students' lives. The 10th annual honoree will be flown to Los Angeles to attend the 2024 GRAMMYS, officially known as the 66th GRAMMY Awards, as well as a range of GRAMMY Week events. The nine additional finalists will receive a \$1,000 honorarium, and the schools of all 10 finalists will receive matching grants. Fifteen semi-finalists will receive a \$500 honorarium with matching school grants.

The matching grants provided to the schools are made possible by the generosity and support of the GRAMMY Museum's Education Champion Ford Motor Company Fund. In addition, the American Choral Directors Association, National Association for Music

Education, NAMM Foundation, and National Education Association support this program through outreach to their constituencies.

[Learn more about the Music Educator Award.](#)

See the full list of the 2024 Music Educator Award quarterfinalists and legacy applicants [here](#):

2024 MUSIC EDUCATOR AWARD QUARTERFINALISTS

Name	School	City	State
Morgan Lentino	Otter Creek Elementary	Elgin	Illinois

– Daily Herald –
'He helps us a lot': Elgin principal focuses on giving students opportunities
May 10, 2023
By Alicia Fabbre



Marc Spacone, principal at Larsen Middle School in Elgin, speaks with Julian Velazquez, a seventh grader. "He's very nice," Velazquez said. "He helps us a lot ... we can always go to him and he will help us." Brian Hill | Staff Photographer

When **Marc Spacone** became principal at **Larsen Middle School** in Elgin, he knew his back corner office would not do.

He didn't want students, parents or teachers to have to go through a secretary to get to him or be hidden away or out of view from the community he serves. So, the corner office became a file room, and **Spacone** took over a conference room near the front desk.

"It made no sense," he said of the corner office. "The principal's office was the corner office behind the secretary -- no windows, no approachability and you're hiding behind a secretary.

"The first thing I said was I'm moving out of that corner office and I'm making myself a space where people can come to me."

He proudly points to fingerprints on the window looking into his office, noting that teachers, parents and students regularly walk by and tap on his window to come in to chat.



*When he talks to students, **Larsen Middle School Principal Marc Spacone** makes sure to ask them to list one thing that is working well at the Elgin school and one thing that could be improved. - Brian Hill | Staff Photographer*

"The principal's job first and foremost is to be there for his or her students, the teachers and the community," he said.

Earlier this year, **Spacone**, who has been principal at **Larsen Middle School** since 2021, was named the Illinois Principal Association's Middle School Principal of the Year for the Kishwaukee Region, which includes schools in Kane, DeKalb, Winnebago, Boone and McHenry counties.

"Principal Spacone is a hands-on leader who easily develops strong relationships with his students at **Larsen** and has established a commitment to high standards and success for all students," said **Annette Acevedo, executive director of middle schools for Elgin Area Unit District U-46.**



Marc Spacone, principal at Larsen Middle School in Elgin, started his career in 1999 as a social studies teacher. A son of Italian immigrants, he encourages students to dream big and not let obstacles stand in their way. - Brian Hill | Staff Photographer

"He encourages his teachers to foster a culture of respect and growth in their classrooms," she added. "We're fortunate to have him leading Larsen Middle School."

Students at Larsen say Spacone is an advocate and recount stories of how he's helped them navigate middle school life.

"He's very nice," seventh grade student Julian Velazquez said. "He helps us a lot ... we can always go to him, and he will help us."

Spacone, who also serves on the Lake Zurich village board, started his career in 1999 as a social studies teacher. His career has included a variety of roles, such as divisional chair, dean of students, director of student activities and assistant principal. In addition to serving as principal at Larsen Middle School, Spacone is an adjunct professor at Concordia University, teaching education leadership courses.

The son of Italian immigrants, Spacone said teachers who helped him as a student helped inspire him to pursue a career in education.

"Teaching was just always there for me," said Spacone, who also was a first-generation college student. "I wanted to give back to kids like me who needed opportunities."

As his parents did with him, Spacone encourages his students to "dream big" and not let obstacles stand in their way.



Larsen Middle School Principal Marc Spacone says a principal's job is to be there for his students and staff. When he first started as principal at Larsen in 2021, Spacone moved the principal's office from a back corner to a conference room closer to the main office so students, teachers and parents could feel they could approach him. - Brian Hill | Staff Photographer

"Don't ever let anyone tell you that you're not smart enough, you're not fast enough or you're not this or that," he tells students. "You're always going to have doubters in life; but what are you going to do to get beyond that?"

A cheerleader for his students, staff and school families, **Spacone** focuses on making sure students are getting what they need to be successful. He regularly asks those he meets with to identify something the school can improve upon and something the school is doing right and works to address those needs, whether it's a change in a school form to let students identify preferred pronouns or updates to a dated cafeteria.

"I'm really honored that I have the opportunity to do this work in this district for this community," he said. "I'm trying to really give our kids every opportunity to be successful."

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Curriculum vitae

Name: **Marc Spacone**

School: **Larsen Middle School** in Elgin

Occupation: **Principal**

Education: Bachelor of Arts, Political Science, Northern Illinois University (1994); Masters in Education, Teaching and Learning, DePaul University (1999); Master of Arts, Educational Leadership, Northeastern Illinois University (2006)

Work history: Social studies teacher, various schools, 1999-2009; School Improvement Coordinator, Libertyville High School, 2006-2009; Dean of Students and Bridges Evening Program Administrator, Warren Township High School, 2009-2012; Principal, North Cook Young Adult Academy, 2012-2014; Director of Student Activities/Dean of Students/Interim Division Chair, East Aurora High School, 2014-2016; Assistant Principal, Larsen Middle School, 2016-2021; Principal, Larsen Middle School, 2021 to present; Adjunct faculty, Concordia University, 2013 to present

Other: Lake Zurich village trustee, 2014-present

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Principal's pointers

Larsen Middle School Principal Marc Spacone began his career in education in 1999 and has served in various roles, including social studies teacher, dean of students, assistant principal and principal. Here are some of his top tips for students, teachers and principals:

For teachers

- Always make it about the kids, they are the sole focus of our work.
- It's OK to fail and especially important for our students to see us fail and learn to move forward.

For students

- Our failure leads to our success.
- Don't ever let anyone tell you that you aren't capable; prove them wrong.

For principals

- Be authentic with everyone.
- Integrity is all you have.

– Examiner of Bartlett –

Elected board members sworn to Dist. U-46 posts

(This article also ran in the Examiner of Streamwood/Examiner of South Elgin)

May 10, 2023

By Seth Hancock

Candidates elected in the April election were sworn in to the Board of Education in School District U-46 at its meeting on Monday, May 1.

The board approved by a 7-0 vote the canvass of votes showing Sue Kerr (11,236 votes) and Kate Thommes (11,097) being reelected and Chanda Schwarts (9,086) and Samreen Khan (8,932) winning seats held by outgoing board members John Devereux and Eva Porter. Maureen Morris (7,567) and Heather Manzella (6,791) were the other two candidates in the election.

Asraar Ahmed Siddiqui, a Bartlett High School junior, was also sworn in as the student advisor replacing South Elgin senior Angelica Harris.

Sue Kerr was reelected as the board's president, Melissa Owens as vice president and Kate Thommes as secretary pro-tempore by 7-0 votes.

The first review by the board was of 11 policies with proposed changes that will be voted on at the May 15 meeting.

Several of those policies were up solely for review and monitoring with no changes proposed. Those include policies 4:40 (incurring debt), 5:285 (drug and alcohol testing for school bus and commercial vehicle drivers), 6:210 (instructional materials) and 8:70 (accommodating individuals with disabilities).

Most of the proposed changes to other policies were the results of a new state law, Faith's Law.

Included was policy 2:110 (qualifications, term and duties of board officers) adding to the board president's duties ensuring the superintendent completes "sexual misconduct related to employment history reviews (EHR)" for new hires.

Added to Policy 4:60 (purchases and contracts) is a prohibition on contractors' employees "having direct contact with children or students if the contractor has not performed a sexual misconduct related employment history review."

Policy 5:30 (hiring process and criteria) and 5:150 (personnel records) add language regarding EHRs, and Policy 5:90 (abused and neglected child reporting) adds language

regarding notification of parents and guardians if a U-46 employee/contractor “alleged to have engaged in sexual misconduct with the student as defined in Faith’s Law.”

Policy 5:125 (personal technology and social media; usage and conduct) has minor language changes, and Policy 6:230 (library media program) adds language supporting the American Library Association’s Library Bill of Rights as well as instituting practices related to library material complaints.

– Examiner of Bartlett –

U-46 expense proposals set for board vote May 15

(This article also ran in the Examiner of Streamwood/Examiner of South Elgin)

May 10, 2023

By Seth Hancock

The Board of Education in **School District U-46** is set to vote on \$4.1 million in expenditure proposals at its upcoming meeting on Monday, May 15.

The items were presented on May 1.

The largest item was a three-year contract renewal with Istation for its literacy intervention resource. It was among seven total curriculum and instruction contract renewals that will all be paid for through the education fund, if approved.

Other contract renewals include with Houghton Mifflin Harcourt for fifth and sixth grade science resources (\$421,990), two with Savvas for K-12 science and planetarium resources (\$240,199) and social studies resources (\$143,075), two with National Geographic for K-12 science and planetarium resources (\$84,000) and for NatGeo social studies resources (\$56,250) and one with TurnItIn, LLC for its text matching tool (\$58,991).

Additional contracts, all education funds, include with Follett School Solutions for its library management system (\$174,938), one with EBSCO for advanced research databases (\$115,300) and one with Journal Storage for databases (\$9,885).

A bid from Pala Supply Company will cost \$1.2 million, from federal funds, for elementary supply kits.

“We plan to order 21,449 supply kits for all of our **U-46 students Kindergarten–6th grade,**” the proposal states. “Kit supplies were determined by teachers across **U-46.**”

With Celtic Environmental, the district is asking for \$283,200 (operations and maintenance fund) for asbestos abatement at the **Dream Academy and Central Schools**

Program where renovations are taking place. The proposal states that “in order to facilitate the work, the asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) need to be removed by a licensed environmental contractor.”

The district is asking for \$68,492 (federal funds) for the literacy program LitCamp from Scholastic, Inc. and \$37,590 (operations and maintenance fund) with Armstrong Relocation to move furniture from classrooms and offices at **Streamwood’s Tefft Middle School** during fire alarm replacement and ceiling/lighting/insulation projects.

Additionally, the board will vote on a resolution allowing a law firm to intervene for the district when property owners appeal a property value assessment with the state’s Property Tax Appeal Board.

– Examiner of Streamwood –

Sabres baseball rolls on by winning six of seven

May 10, 2023

By Seth Hancock

The **Streamwood baseball team** had a big day at the plate in a 21-5 Upstate Eight Conference win over East Aurora on Thursday, May 4 at Streamwood.

The win, which included a 17-run second inning, saw three home runs from the **Sabres** included a grand slam from **Austin Paskewic**. **Nick Weaver** (3-for-3, two RBI) and **Joey Lunz** (two RBI) also cleared the fences.

The **Sabres** also had two-hit performances from **Chris Lara** (triple, RBI), **Josh Wilder** (double, RBI), **Chris Cole** (three RBI), **Isaiah Ortiz** (two RBI) and **Miguel Rodriguez**. **Paskewic** got the win on the mound.

“A lot of our big boys like **Nick Weaver** and **Joey Lunz** and **Austin Paskewic** did a great job of hitting balls hard and carrying our offense,” said **Streamwood coach Dan Jennings**. “And then a lot of guys in the back end, too, hit a lot of balls hard.”

Jennings added: “**Austin** is a sophomore, and he’s learning and developing some new things. He is and will be a really good player on the mound and elsewhere.”

It was part of a six-game winning streak and a sweep of East Aurora after a 14-2 win on Wednesday, May 3 in Aurora. **Weaver** (3-for-3, RBI), **Dylan Love** (3-for-4, triple, two

RBI), **Frank Sanchez** (2-for-3, triple, two RBI), **Paskewic** (2-for-2, double, two RBI), **Lunz** (2-for-3, double, RBI) and **Lara** (double, RBI) led the offense.

The win streak was snapped at Rolling Meadows with the **Sabres** dropping a 5-4 non conference game on Saturday, May 6. **Weaver** had two RBI to lead the effort. The week opened with a 13-6 UEC win at Glenbard South on Tuesday, May 2. **Love** (3-for-4, double, triple, RBI), **Lara** (3-for-5, double, RBI), **Sanchez** (2-for-4, RBI), **Weaver** (2-for-3, two RBI), **Lunz** (double, two RBI) and **Wilder** (double, two RBI) led the effort.

The win streak began with a 7-6 UEC victory over Glenbard East on Monday, April 24 at Judson University. **Weaver** (2-for-4, two RBI), **Sanchez** (2-for-3, double, two RBI) and **Lara** (2-for-2) led the effort.

The **Sabres** then swept West Chicago in two UEC games, 7-5 at Judson on Wednesday, April 26 and 11-1 at West Chicago on Friday, April 28. **Lara and Sanchez** each had three hits in Game 1, **Weaver and Paskewic** two hits in Game 2 to lead **Streamwood**.

Streamwood is now 19-5-1 overall, 12-2 in the UEC.

– Chicago Tribune –

Rick Armstrong's Aurora, Elgin, Naperville softball rankings and player of the week

May 9, 2023

By Rick Armstrong - Aurora Beacon-News

Top 10

With records through Monday and previous rankings in parentheses.

1. Yorkville 24-1 (1)

Senior pitcher **Madi Reeves** tops 200 strikeouts for season and 800 for career.

2. St. Charles North 15-2 (2)

Sophia Olman's 27 RBIs lead North Stars, the reigning Class 4A state champion.

3. Oswego 19-7 (5)

Hot-hitting [Corrin Kennedy](#) helps Panthers go 5-1 in their last six games.

4. Newark 25-1 (4)

Senior pitcher [Kaitlyn Schofield](#) lifts Norsemen past Herscher (20-7) in 11 innings.

5. Benet 16-8 (3)

Junior center fielder [Nina Pesare](#) commits to Illinois-Chicago.

6. Oswego East 16-8 (6)

[Ronnie Craft](#) hits .500 to lead Wolves in 5-1 record in last six games.

7. Naperville North 16-6 (8)

Huskies clinch DuPage Valley Conference title behind lefty ace [Charlotte Chelich](#) (9-2).

8. [South Elgin](#) 16-4-1 (9)

[Storm's](#) second win over [Bartlett](#) strengthens Upstate Eight Conference lead.

9. [Bartlett](#) 19-4 (10)

Maryville recruit [Addison Koth](#) unleashes barrage of home runs for Hawks.

10. St. Charles East 12-9-1 (7)

Saints rally for five runs to tie Lake Park 11-11, get stunned by walk-off grand slam.

Player of the Week

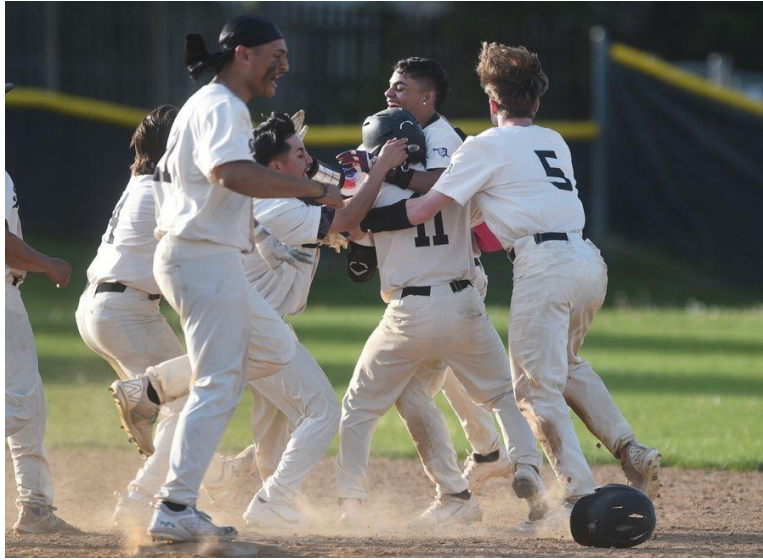
Senior catcher [Corrin Kennedy](#) hit four home runs in five games to establish Oswego's program record for home runs in a season with 10, breaking the previous mark of seven. The Jacksonville State recruit, who hit for the cycle earlier this season, was 11-for-18 and drove in 13 runs for the week.

– Daily Herald –

Streamwood stuns South Elgin in 7th, ties for UEC lead

May 9, 2023

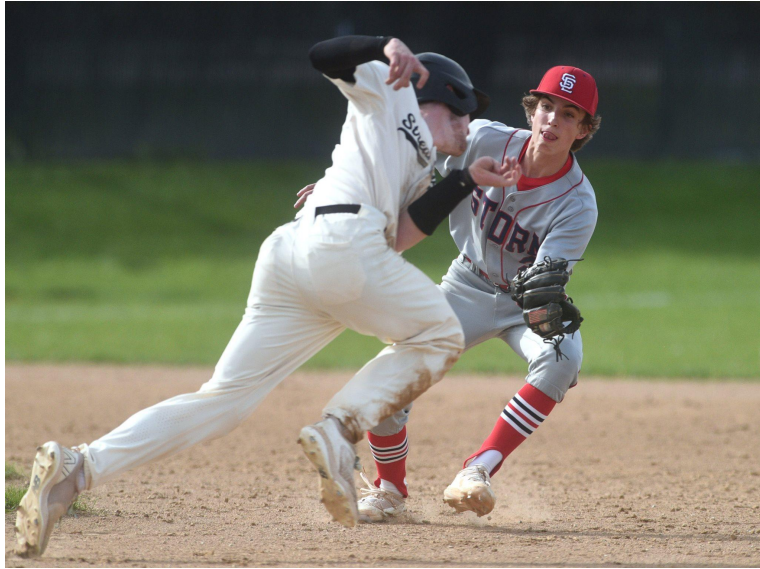
By Allen Oshinski



Streamwood's Chris Lara (11) and Nick Weaver (5) celebrate and hug teammate Frank Sanchez who drove in the winning run to defeat South Elgin in Tuesday's baseball game in Streamwood. Paul Valade | Staff Photographer



Streamwood's Josh Wilder, right, slides safely into home for the winning run as South Elgin pitcher Tyler Glowacki shows the umpire the ball during Tuesday's baseball game in Streamwood. (Paul Valade/pvalade@dailyherald.com)



South Elgin's Aiden Bernau, right, gets ready to tag out **Streamwood's Nick Weaver** as he heads to second base during Tuesday's baseball game in Streamwood. (Paul Valade/pvalade@dailyherald.com)



Streamwood's Nick Weaver, left, and pitcher **Miguel Rodriguez**, right, celebrate their win over **South Elgin** during Tuesday's baseball game in Streamwood. (Paul Valade/pvalade@dailyherald.com)



South Elgin's Jordan Green slides safely back into second base as **Streamwood's Frank Sanchez (18)** lays down the tag during Tuesday's baseball game in Streamwood. (Paul Valade/pvalade@dailyherald.com)



Streamwood's Joey Lunz, left, slides safely into second base under the tag of **South Elgin's Aiden Bernau (2)** during Tuesday's baseball game in Streamwood. (Paul Valade/pvalade@dailyherald.com)

South Elgin coach Jim Kating described Streamwood as a scrappy team.

That was certainly an apt description after the Sabres rallied twice against the Storm for a hard-fought 6-5 win Tuesday in Streamwood.

Frank Sanchez's fielder's choice grounder scored the tying and winning runs in the bottom of the seventh as the Sabres tied the Storm atop the Upstate Eight Conference standings.

Both teams are 13-2 and play again Wednesday in South Elgin. The Storm then finishes conference play with two against Bartlett while the Sabres face Fenton.

South Elgin took a 5-4 lead in the top of the seventh as Jordan Green's drive to the right field corner plated Aedon Segovia, who reached when he was hit by a pitch for the second straight plate appearance.

The Sabres had one last chance against South Elgin ace Tyler Glowacki. They quickly took advantage, loading the bases on 2 hit batters sandwiched around Josh Wilder's bunt single.

Sanchez then hit a one-hopper to third base. Antonio Alanis, coming from third, appeared to beat the throw. When the ball sailed to the backstop, Wilder scored from second, setting off a wild celebration.

"We didn't hit the ball the way we wanted to, but the energy has never been at a higher level than it was today," said Sanchez through a translator. "I was just trying to get it over the infielders to tie the ballgame. Fortunately for us, the third baseman made an error."

South Elgin jumped ahead in a bizarre first inning.

Kyle Steinhofler led off with a double off the left fielder's glove. Segovia walked. After Green laid down a bunt, the throw pulled the second baseman across the bag, where he was leveled by Green and both runners scored. Jackson Lee and Quinn Bradford later singled in runs.

"We didn't make plays in the first inning," said Streamwood coach Dan Jennings. "So we knew we could slow them down a little bit, we just had to make a couple of plays, and Miguel really bore down. He did a great job."

After Bradford's hit, Streamwood starter Miguel Rodriguez restored order, retiring 10 in a row until Aiden Bernau singled to lead off the fifth.

Meanwhile, **Glowacki** held the **Sabres** hitless through the first 4 innings but ran into trouble in the fifth.

He walked **Alanis** with 1 out. Wilder bunted and reached first when the throw was wide. Any confusion about whether the no-hitter was intact was laid to rest when **Nick Weaver, Sanchez and Chris Lara** followed with clean singles. The last drove in 2 runs to tie the game.

“When you let a scrappy team hang around, this is something that can happen,” **Kating** said. “When you have four or five errors and beat yourself in situations instead of taking care of your business, that’s what will happen.”

Carter Blanchard pitched the seventh inning to pick up the win.

– Daily Herald –

Softball: Larkin rallies for extra-inning win over Glenbard South

May 10, 2023

By Jared Birchfield

Larkin's Audriana Escobar "took one for the team" at the most opportune time in Tuesday's Upstate Eight Conference extra-inning game between the host **Royals** and Glenbard South.

The compliment is given to a player who is awarded first base after being hit by a pitched ball.

The left fielder came to plate in the bottom of the eighth with the bases loaded, one out and the game tied. **Escobar** was awarded first base after the first pitch of the at-bat hit her in the leg which also forced in **Julissa Aguinaga** with the winning run for a 5-4 come-from-behind victory.

"I was ready to drive the ball but then immediately it hit my leg," said **Escobar**.

After the **Royals** jumped out a 2-1 lead in the first inning on **starting pitcher Chelsea Herrick's** single down the right field line that scored **Escobar and Kaitlyn Neubert**, Glenbard South rallied to tie the game in the top of the second. Kaylee Full's single to center plated Lauren Atkinson, who also scored the team's run in the first.

Glenbard South (10-7, 7-5) went ahead 4-2 in the next inning. After Raiders starting pitcher Hannah Rafferty-Flatter popped out, Grace Zeman drew a base-on-balls. Julia Galvin reached base on an infield error. Both scored when Larkin's infield could not handle Madison Blazek's grounder.

Herrick, who pitched all eight innings for the win, kept the Raiders in check the rest of the way. The right-handed senior got out of jams in the fifth and sixth innings and retired the side in order in both the seventh and eighth innings.

"Chelsea pitched an amazing game," said Larkin coach Anne Vogt. "Out of the eight innings, five of them ended with either a big strikeout or a big play."

"It was the first hot day of the year and I think both teams did a nice job of sustaining it. It was a long game. I think each team had their opportunities," Glenbard South coach Julie Fonda said. "We didn't hit our pitches; we fished a little bit. Chelsea did a nice job. Last time we saw her, we had 10 or 12 hits. A totally different game."

After the first inning, Rafferty-Flatter settled down and allowed only two base runners in the next three frames. The junior right-hander, who also went the distance, struck out 13 batters.

Larkin (13-6, 9-5) took full advantage of the opportunities it had to get back in the game.

The Royals got one run back in the fifth. Alanis Ortega opened the frame with a walk, advanced to second on Escobar's ground out, and scored on Neubert's single up the middle.

The Royals tied the game in the sixth. Aguinaga opened the inning with a walk and advanced all the way to third when Glenbard South's infield could not handle Sophia Forsberg's bunt. Aguinaga scored on a passed ball during Camila Alonzo's at-bat.

"We hung in there. We didn't hit great, but we played good defense," Vogt said. "We showed a little grit there. We just kept coming back."