

DISTRICT 2 SOFTBALL:

Lackawanna Trail wins Class A crown

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Lackawanna Trail's Laurelann Penn slides into home plate to score the game's first run in the third inning as Old Forge's Denise Evans catches the ball during the District 2 Class A championship game Tuesday at Marywood University. Penn, a pinch runner, came around to score from second base on an error.



Lackawanna Trail's Breanna Halter makes it safe to second base as Old Forge's Kierston Breig stretches out to make a catch during the District 2 Class A final at Marywood University on Tuesday, May 31, 2016.



Rain forced Lackawanna Trail to practice inside the school's gymnasium Monday.

While there, the players noticed it had been a while since a championship banner was hung for softball. The last time was 1993 and that was when the Lady Lions were part of District 12.

So they decided to do something about it.

Allison Decker tossed a two-hit shutout, Mackenzie Duffy, Samantha Baltrusaitis and Breanna Halter each had two hits and Lackawanna Trail rolled to a 6-0 victory over Old Forge on Tuesday to win the District 2 Class A softball championship at Marywood University.

"We talked about that (Monday)," Decker said. "There was no District 2 (championship banner) up there and we wanted to change that."

If bringing the school its first District 2 softball title wasn't motivation enough, there was the bitter memory of a 10-inning loss to Mountain View in last year's district final.

"I personally was not going to let it slip through my fingers again," Decker said. "I still feel the sadness from last year. That drive helped me today. And I think everybody on the team had that. It wasn't just me."

Decker did her part, limiting Old Forge (5-12) to just a pair of singles — one by Kierstyn Breig with two outs in the first inning; the other by Hannah Acevedo with one out in the third inning.

She only had two strikeouts, but the Lackawanna Trail defense made all the plays behind her.

"We had only two hits, but that doesn't reflect how good we hit the ball today," Old Forge coach Pat Revello said. "It seemed like we hit everything at them and they hit everything in the gaps.

"We got beat by a good pitcher and a team that made every play defensively."

Early on, Old Forge pitcher Corianne Holzman matched Decker, retiring the first eight Lady Lions batters.

But Halter singled with two outs in the third. Duffy followed with a single. Madison Lee reached on an error, which allowed pinch-runner Laurelann Penn to score and make it 1-0.

Baltrusaitis then crushed a two-run triple to center field to give Trail a 3-0 lead.

It stayed that way until the fifth.

Again, Halter was the catalyst, leading off with a single.

"I was just trying to make the best contact that I could," Halter, one of the team's two seniors, said of her two hits. "I just tried to put the ball in play and see what happened. We got rallies off them. It was a big moment."

Duffy singled Halter to second. Both runners advanced one base on a wild pitch, and Lee lofted a sacrifice fly to left field to score Halter and make it 4-0.

That brought up Baltrusaitis. This time, the freshman ripped a double to left-center to plate Duffy. Baltrusaitis wound up scoring later in the inning on an error.

"It was a fastball right down the middle and I was able to drive it," Baltrusaitis said of her double.

"My teammates really put me in a good place. I just tried to do the best I could for the betterment of my team."

With a 6-0 cushion, Decker cruised the rest of the way. She retired 13 of the final 14 batters she faced, and when the last out was made it touched off a wild celebration by the Lady Lions.

"This is a big win for the girls," Trail coach John Richter said. "All year long, we felt we were as good as anybody as long as we played smart and made the plays. And we did."

Lackawanna Trail (10-6) advances to the PIAA Class A tournament. It will face the District 4 champion — either Bloomsburg or Benton — in the first round Monday.