

Rastetter, late offensive surge lifts Taylor past Saint Francis

By Sean Douglas

Behind another pair of stellar offensive performances from freshman Aleyah Rastetter and a surge of offense late in game two, the Taylor Trojans completed their season sweep of Saint Francis, recording 5-3 and 8-2 triumphs at Gudakunst Field on Friday evening.

For the second straight home series, Rastetter swung a white-hot bat, hitting 5-for-8 from the dish, including a 4-for-4 performance in game one, to go along with four runs batted in. Additionally, the freshman outfielder collected her fourth and fifth home runs of the season, including the go-ahead, three-run shot in the opener to help secure the Trojans' victory.

With her recent offensive output, the Frankton native has become the Trojans' most lethal hitter in Crossroads League action, batting .358 with 19 hits, four doubles, a team-leading five home runs, and a team-best 18 RBI.

Ashton Whitman was also efficient against the Cougars, batting 3-for-4 with a run scored, two RBI, and a pair of perfect sacrifice bunts. Maddi Evans, Kara Tucker, and Emma West each recorded three hits apiece, while Kristin Mihalic finished 2-for-4



Aleyah Rastetter hit a pair of home runs against the Cougars, including the game-winning, three-run shot in game one **Photo provided by Taylor University**

with a home run. Additionally, Caitlyn Grim drove in a pair of runs for the Trojans in the doubleheader sweep.

After a scoreless opening three frames to begin game one, the Cougars grabbed the advantage in the top of the fourth, hitting three straight singles to take a 2-0 lead. However, the Trojans tied it up in the bottom half of the frame as Grim doubled home Evans before scoring on a Cougars' fielding error.

Saint Francis regained the lead with a solo shot in the top of the sixth, but Rastetter delivered in the clutch, crushing a 1-0 pitch to center field in the bottom half of the frame to put the Trojans back in front for good.

Evans (13-3) recorded her fifth double-digit strikeout performance in her last eight outings, punching out 10 Cougars to collect her 13th win of the season. The Fairmount, Indiana native scattered just six hits and did not allow a walk in her

ninth complete-game outing.

In the nightcap, the Trojans scored single runs in each of the first three innings to take a 3-0 lead. Rastetter hit her second home run of the night to left field in the first frame to open the scoring, before Mihalic led off the second with her seventh round tripper to increase the Trojans' advantage to 2-0. Pinch runner Nicole Brindle made it 3-0 in the third, scoring on a wild pitch.

The Cougars answered with single runs in the fourth and fifth frames to cut their deficit to one, but the Trojans used a five-run sixth inning to take control of the contest. Whitman hit a two-run single to start the rally, before a Grim sacrifice fly and back-to-back doubles from West and Tucker helped Taylor put the game away.

Lauren Kanai (11-6) earned the victory, striking out two in 4.2 innings of work, while Cassy Lewis put together another solid effort in relief, recording three strikeouts in the final 2.1 frames.

Eastbrook — continued from Page 8



ayleigh Gross slides into third base in Eastbrook's big win over Southern Wells on Wednesday.

Photo by Sean Douglas

strong," Coates said. Along with their battling, the Panthers received a pair of tremendous pitching performances in the circle. Allyson Mullenix gave up just one hit, which came in the first inning, and pitched four straight 1-2-3 frames, striking out three.

Brooklyn Stupples pitched a scoreless fifth, striking out the side to secure Eastbrook's victory.

"Mullenix pitched a great game, and then Brooklyn comes in and

keeps them off balance," Coates said. "I'm very excited for those two."

Most importantly, Coates, and the Panthers, are just happy to be back out on the softball diamond.

"It's good to be back," Coates said. "It's good to be around the kids and the other coaches and just getting the chance to play. Getting the chance to come back and play is special, and we still aren't taking it for granted."

Sports schedule

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|--------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Wednesday, April 21 | 5 p.m.—GT—Marion @ Madison-Grant | Quarterfinals) |
| 4:30 p.m.—BG—Mississinewa @ Frankton | 5:30 p.m.—BBB—Oak Hill @ Tri-Central | Thursday, April 22 |
| 4:30 p.m.—GT—Elwood @ Mississinewa | 7 p.m.—ML—Taylor University @ Aquinas College (WHAC Tournament) | 4:30 p.m.—GSB—Eastbrook @ Oak Hill |
| 5 p.m.—GSB—Norwell @ Marion | | 5 p.m.—BBB—Eastbrook |
| | | See Schedule, Page 10 |

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