

**Late error proves costly for Cougars as Santa Margarita wins CIF-SS Division 2 title:**

	R:	H:	E:
Santa Margarita (26-11 Overall):	0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-1=1	7	0
Norco (20-12 Overall):	0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0=0	6	1

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Los Angeles, CA (Dodger Stadium)-

Whoever lost Saturday afternoon's CIF-SS Division 2 baseball championship game on Saturday afternoon between Norco & Santa Margarita can't say they didn't have opportunities to score. Nineteen combined runners were left on base between the Cougars and Eagles in a game which went to twelve innings before a winner was decided. Unfortunately for Norco the lone run which came across in this game wasn't one of theirs as a late error led to Santa Margarita's winning run in their half of the twelfth. For a second time (1984) the Cougars fell in a CIF-SS championship game despite eight shutout innings from starting pitcher Michael Forbes.

In the Norco third inning Menelik Israel singled to right field but was left out there as Ryan Lamastra grounded into a double play. Bryce Cermeneli then tripled but was stranded with an inning ending groundout by Christopher Conniff.

Two hit batters and a single from Jack Collins loaded the bases with one out for Santa Margarita in their half of the fourth. Forbes got a flyout and strikeout to escape trouble.

Perhaps the Cougars best scoring opportunity came in their sixth inning. Four straight Norco batters reached base on a double from Cermeneli, two walks, and a fielder's choice. Eagles starter Matthew McClure got a strikeout and groundout to escape the jam.

Forbes exited in the eighth having thrown eight shutout innings, allowed six hits, six strikeouts, a walk and two hit batters.

He remarked "Our guys may not get the stars or accolades that other guys get but we fight until the last out. Although you never forget losing in a championship it was quite a ride just to get here and we're privileged to play in a place where so much history was made in our sport."

Martin Delgado entered and allowed just two baserunners in his first three innings both on walks. In the Santa Margarita 9th inning one of those walks was stranded on two impressive catches by Conniff, playing shortstop. One of those involved at least a two foot standing vertical jump to grab a line drive.

In the Eagles 12th inning Collins led off with a single up the middle. He advanced to third on an error from Stewart Slessor which put Michael Mira on second base with no outs. Aaron Lamont's fly ball for the first out was not deep enough to score on but Milan Tolentino's was and it took a football style over the shoulder catch from Forbes ,moved to right field, to keep a 1-0 deficit.

Norco went down in order during their half of the 12th.

Eagles coach Chris Malec remarked afterwards "Our pitching set the tone for this game especially getting shut down innings immediately after Norco escaped jams. This division was a tough challenge and for us to come out on top was absolutely crazy. All four pitchers today deserve major kudos for their composure on the big stage."

Cougars coach Gary Parcell said "We have nothing to be ashamed of in losing today. For both of our teams to get here says something about the level of baseball in our leagues (Big VIII & Trinity) and how well prepared you have to be once postseason comes around. We haven't scored a lot of runs all year and tried to force one across but just couldn't today. Even though we lost playing in Dodger Stadium will be something these guys remember for the rest of their lives."

**Eagles Notables:**

WP: Spencer Edwards 6  $\frac{2}{3}$  IP, 1 Hit, 0 Runs, 3 BB, 2 K's

Connor Bane>>2-4 with a walk

Jack Collins>>2-5 with a walk

Fifth title game appearance in program history, first title since 2014

**Cougar Notables:**

LP: Martin Delgado 4 IP, 1 Hit, 1 Run, 2 BB, 0 K's

Bryce Cermeneli>>3-5

Second title game appearance in program history, 1984 (Angel Stadium)