Errors, strong defense lead to softball victory

By Victor J. Diniak

The softball team combined strong defense and good pitching to defeat visiting Emmanuel College Thursday afternoon, 4-1. The victory boosts MIT's record to 3-1 on the season.

The Engineers opened the scoring in the bottom of the second without the benefit of a hit. Catcher Pat Leach '86 went to first base after she was hit by a pitch. Marjorie Bump '87 advanced Leach with a bunt that was mishandled by Emmanuel's third baseman. Leach then scored on a passed ball.

The visitors retaliated in the third with a run on a passed ball. Emmanuel's pitcher dropped an easy pop-up. Brown then walked to second.

A sacrifice and a walk loaded the bases with two outs, but shortstop Julie Brown '88 ended the threat when she stopped a grounder trying to go to second. A single to center brought the runner home and put Emmanuel on the board, 1-0.

Emmanuel threatened again in the fourth inning, as a single to left center and a walk put runners on first and second. Grace Sacca-rdo '86 fanned an attempt to advance the runners, catching a line drive to left field.

A sacrifice and a walk loaded the bases with two outs, but shortstop Julie Brown '88 ended the threat when she stopped a grounder and made a strong throw to waiting first baseman Mary Cox '86.

The Engineers' offense followed the defense's lead in the bottom of the fourth. Leach opened the inning with a single up the middle. Cox's nearly perfect sacrifice bunt moved Leach to second.

Bump got a lucky break when Emmanuel's pitcher dropped an easy pop-up. Brown then walked to load the bases with one out. Designated hitter Niki Pentelias '88 walked, forcing in Leach and sending the Engineers into the lead, 2-1.

Emmanuel got another out when Stacy Thompson '86 popped to the shortstop. Co-captain Julie Chen '86, however, rooked a single to left-center, driving Bump home. Brown was thrown out at the plate to end the inning with the Engineers ahead to stay, 3-1.

Given the two-run lead, the Engineer's defense dug in and never looked back. Co-captain Louise Jandura G was in complete command on the mound, as she retired the next nine Emmanuel batters.

Left fielder Saccardo and right fielder Maria Kotodski '87 bashed in fly balls, while Jandura aided her own cause when she put a third batter out at first base for a scoreless top of the fifth.

Emmanuel could not get the ball out of the infield in the sixth. Shortstop Brown caught a pair of pop-ups, and Chen fielded a grounder and made the short throw from second to Cox at first base for another scoreless inning.

It was three up and three down once again for Emmanuel in the seventh and final inning. Bump put out the lead-off hitter at first. Kotodski caught a fly to right, and Thompson ended the game pulling in a fly ball center.

The Engineers picked up an insurance run in the sixth inning to raise the final score to 4-1. Brown reached first on an error by Emmanuel's shortstop. Thompson doubled to center, advancing Brown to third. Brown then scored on another passed ball.

Fifth year head coach Jean Heiny was pleased with her squad's performance. "We played good defense and good pitching," she said. "Emmanuel's experience showed."

Heiny said her team "struggled in the beginning of the season," but she has high hopes that they will turn things around in the second half.

"We have a good start — we beat WPI and we played even better today," she added. "We have all the necessary elements to succeed: pitching, defense, and offense."

The squad hosted the Brandeis Judges in a doubleheader Saturday and will travel to Southeastern Massachusetts University today. The team will return home Thursday afternoon to face the Coast Guard Academy at 3pm.

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