

Mike Crisman (18) offers-up a high-five for Capt. Mark McLaughlin as he crosses the plate after belting his second solo home run in the annual NAS Kingsville-City of Kingsville softball challenge game at Dick Kleberg Park. (Story by Jon Gagné, Photos by Fifi Kieschnick).



## Homers power NAS Kingsville Kings to 13-10 win over City in annual 4th of July softball challenge

Scott Schoeman belted a tie-breaking two-run home run in the top of the seventh inning and Mark McLaughlin added a pair of solo shots to lead the NAS Kingsville Kings to a 13-10 win over the City of Kingsville Spurs in the second annual Leadership softball challenge at Kleberg Park July 4. The win for NAS Kingsville evened the series at 1-1.



"This was a good game for us," Kings coach Jeanie Alexander said after the game. "I think everybody – both teams – played well, and the score was close throughout. That's the way it should be. I'm proud of my team today."



City manager and coach Dick Messbarger accepted the loss by tossing kudos to the Kings coach, players and fans.

"I have to hand it to Coach Jeanie Alexander," Messbarger said after the game. "She put together a true

leadership roster of for the air station that represented the leadership of every command and activity aboard the base. It was a good game, well played by both teams, and I congratulate the air station on their win."

The Kings jumped out to a 4-0 lead in the top of the first inning. With one out, Mike Crisman picked up the first hit of the game with a single to left center. One out later, Chad Webster singled to left to send Crisman to second. Randy Foust's single to left drove in the first run of the game, and a single by Mike Kistler scored Webster to make it 2-0. A throwing error produced another run, and a single by David Haigh scored Kistler with the fourth run of the inning.

The City of Kingsville came right back with three runs in the bottom of the first, all coming on a three-run home run to left field by Paul Ruiz.



NAS Kingsville added another run in the second as Schoeman doubled to score Johnny Tienda who had reached on an error. The City Spurs failed to score in the bottom of the second, giving the Kings a 5-3 lead.



McLaughlin got things going for the Kings in the top of the third with a leadoff homerun over the center field fence. Singles by Crisman, Webster, Foust and Kistler plated another run and the Kings had a 7-3 lead. But that lead would be short-lived.

In the bottom of the third, Mike Trujillo reached on an error to start things off and consecutive singles by Kellum, Anthony Luna and Kurt Branson accounted for three runs to make it 7-6. Then, with no outs and runners on second and third, the Kings issued an intentional walk to Paul Ruiz, who homered earlier, to load the bases.



Lupe Ruiz spoiled that strategy by singling to right to score Luna with the fourth run of the inning, and one out later, Lupe scored on an infield grounder by Kaden Branson to put Kingsville in the lead. An RBI single by Jae Early produced the final run of the inning for the Spurs as they headed into the top of the fourth holding their first lead of the game, 9-7.



The Kings tied the game 9-9 with a pair of runs in the fourth, but the Spurs quickly regained control on a solo homerun by Kurt Branson in the bottom of the inning. The Kings would tie the game again, 10-10, in the top of the fifth as McLaughlin would score on a single by Joe Evans, and that's how the game would stay until the seventh inning.



Johnny Tienda started the winning rally in the seventh for the Kings by roping a single to left. Schoeman followed with a two-run homerun to center to give NAS Kingsville a 12-10 lead, and one out later, McLaughlin added his second solo shot of the game to make it 13-10.

Kingsville got a lead-off single by Sage Bynum to get things started in the bottom of the seventh, but their rally ended there, and NAS Kingsville claimed the 13-10 win.



*Home run Duo: Scott Schoeman, who started the scoring in the 7th inning with a two-run home run, greets Mark McLaughlin after his second home run of the game gave NAS Kingsville a 13-10 lead.*

Schoemann led the Kings hitting attack, going 3-for-4 with a home run, a double and four runs batted in. McLaughlin went 3-for-4 with a pair of homers and three runs scored, and Mike Crisman went 3-for-4 and scored a run. Randy Foust went 2-for-3 with an RBI, Dave Kistler went 2-for-3 with a pair of RBI's, and Chad Webster went 2-for-4 with two runs scored. John Tienda went 1-for-3 and scored three runs.

Paul Perez paced the City offense with a 2-for-3 performance at the plate that included a three-run homer, a single, intentional walk and four runs batted in. Mike Kellum had three hits and scored twice, Lupe Perez had three hits and drove in a run, Kurt Branson went 3-for-4 with a home run and three runs batted in, and Anthony Luna went 2-for-4 with a pair of runs scored.



*Winning pitcher Mike Kistler went the distance on the mound for the Kings giving up 10 runs (8 earned) on 16 hits with one walk.*



SWING AND A MISS



"Who's up next?"

*"It's our field so we play by our rules --got a problem with that?"*



*Brian Beck takes a cut ... misses but "that much" ... Russ Braden ropes one foul down the left field line*



*"Billy, Billy, Billy ..."*



Mike Crisman gets ready



Capt. Evans ... happy to be aboard



Capt. Evans slaps a shot to third



Johnny Tienda keeps the CO in line



Lynn Early takes a cut



Chad Webster lines a single to left



Mike Kistler find a hole in center



Kistler tosses one to the plate



Players wait in the dugout for their turn at bat



Our Fans!



ET2 Casey Boyle, left, works on the sound system for the game while the umpires meet with team coaches prior to the game.



More Fans!



PAO Jon Gagné calls the action while Kingsville Chamber of Commerce Director Alice Byers roost for the home team.



The "Boss Lady" poses for a pregame photo with the umpires: Travis King and Terrell Collins of MWR.



## 2012 NAS KINGSVILLE "KINGS"

Front row, from left, Fifi Kieschnick, Deputy Public Affairs Officer; CDR Brian Beck, VT-21 XO; Kristin Lokken, NASK Sports and Fitness; Lynn Early, Housing Director; CDR Scott Wilmot, NASK Executive Officer; CAPT Mark McLaughlin, NASK Commanding Officer; CMDCM Randy Foust, Command Master Chief. Back row, from left, Lt. Col. Scott Schoeman, VT-22 Executive Officer; Mike Crisman, NASK NMCI Field Service rep; David Haigh, MWR Director; CAPT Joe Evans, Commander, Training Air wing TWO; LCDR Russ Braden, Officer in Charge, Branch Health Clinic; LCDR Chad Webster, Air Operations Officer; ADC Johnny Tienda, NASK Safety Officer; AOC Mike Kistler, Naval Munitions Command CPOIC; Jeanie Alexander, Coach and "Boss Lady." Umpires (not pictured) Terrell Collins & Travis King, MWR.



## 2012 CITY OF KINGSVILLE SPURS

Back row, from left: Mike Trujillo, Kurt Branson, Lupe Ruiz, Anthony Luna and Paul Ruiz. Front row, Dick Messbarger, Kaden Branson and Mike Kellum. Not pictured Jae Early and Sage Bynum.  
Field prep by Susan Ivy and the Kleberg Parks & Recreation Department staff.

# Notes from the Cheap Seats

By Jon Gagné

The July 4 softball challenge game between the City and the Air Station was well worth the price of admission (free) and a lot of fun to watch. But it almost didn't happen.

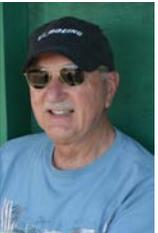
A rain storm settled over Kingsville at about 2 p.m. that afternoon, and the 20-minute downpour left most all the softball fields at Kleberg Park with standing water.

I met Kleberg Parks & Recreation director Susan Ivy at the park at about 3:15 to check the fields out and to determine whether or not the fields could be made playable by the 5 p.m. start time. Keep in mind, this is late in the day on the 4th of July, and yet, Susan had a plan of action.



The main fields, which we had planned to use and set up the sound system in the press box had too much standing water. To avoid getting half of our teams on the injured list, Susan and I opted to check out other fields at the park (they have about a dozen fields at Kleberg Park).

We finally settled on a field that a small bit of standing water, and Susan contacted her staff and within a few minutes they were out there getting the field in shape.



That's about when Dick Messbarger, the coach and general manager of the Kingsville team showed up apparently hoping the game would be cancelled.

"You know," he said to me, "some of my players are away on official business and some of the others don't want to risk injury playing on a wet field. Is there a plan for rescheduling this?"

Ah ... no. The field was dry, the rain was gone, and Dick would have to hold his breath to see if his team would show up or leave him high and dry, so to speak. Fortunately for Dick his players arrived, unfortunately for Dick ... he would have to play, too.

"Forty years ago I'd be right out there with the best of them ..." Messbarger began. Right about then, I decided to tune him out in favor of do a sound check for the audio system.

Our Ground Electronics guys, ET1 Michael Wolfe and ET2 Casey Boyle, had to do a work-around of their own because of



the change in fields, but within a few minutes they had the sound system hooked up and we were ready to go a few minutes later.



Unfortunately we didn't get to enjoy a press box view, but I had the perfect seat – smack dab in the middle of the bleachers. That would be right next to "The Heckler," aka Travis Byers of All American Pest Control. In a bit of role reversal, the Pest Control Guy turned out to be ... well, the Pest.

Travis was supposed to be my announcing assistant, but without the press box we just didn't had room for two people – so he chose to sit in the bleachers and heckle the umpires, the opposing team and just about anyone else he felt deserved it, including me.



Travis helped make the game fun for the fans, the umpires, the announcer and the players. And that's the way this game should be.

I have to say that I was impressed with the roster of players Jeanie Alexander put together to represent the air station. In addition to having the base CO and the wing Commodore, she had the XO's from both squadrons, the OIC from the Clinic, and a number of NAS Kingsville Department heads, It truly was a base leadership team. The City ... not so much.

The Mayor wasn't on the list, neither were any of the City or County Commissioners, law enforcement officials, educational leaders or civic leaders. When I asked Messbarger about that he flashed that sheepish grin he is known for.

"Well," he said, "the Mayor is out mayor'n, the City and county Commissioners are out commissionin', the educators are out edjumakatin', and the directors are all out directin'."

In other words, they were all unavailable. Still, the team that played the game was fun to watch and fun to play. I think they had as much fun as anyone could have with Messbarger barking directions and game strategy.

With each team now with a record of 1-1, players and fans can look forward to next year's rubber match for bragging rights. Maybe the Mayor and the Commissioners will take the day off ... oh, wait, they did that this year, didn't they?.



Rain over, Umpires check out the field