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Ehlinger strikes out 22 in Hauppauge's win

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QUICK SUMMARY Hauppauge's Nicole Ehlinger struck out a career-high 22 batters in a 10-inning win over Eastport-South Manor.



Photo credit: Newsday / J. Conrad Williams Jr. | Hauppauge pitcher Nicole Ehlinger struck out 22 batters in her team's 2-0 extra-innings win over Eastport-South Manor. (Apr. 5, 2010)

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Sometimes the word **dominant** is overused. This is not one of those occasions.

A 10th-inning throwing error helped Hauppauge rally for a 2-0 League V win at Eastport-South Manor Monday, but Nicole Ehlinger's career-high 22 strikeouts stole the show.

"Nicole was outstanding today. She had everything working," coach Jim McGowan said. "She hit spots, she worked ahead all day, which I thought was key."

Pick nearly any stat and it tells a story of supremacy and control: Ehlinger pitched with runners in scoring position only twice, and one of those was in the 10th, when extra-inning rules mandate that an opposing player start the frame at second base. She struck out the side in the second through fifth innings. Only four balls went beyond the infield dirt. She gave up three hits. Her only walk was intentional.

"I was mainly throwing fastballs and outside curves," Ehlinger said. "Once in a while I would throw a screw or a changeup, but mostly curves."

But despite the dazzling performance, it was nearly for naught. Opposing pitcher Catherine Havens matched zeros through the first nine innings for ESM (1-2). She struck out seven and allowed only three hits.

In the 10th, with Julia McNeill starting the inning on second for the Eagles (2-0), Havens got two quick outs on an infield pop and a grounder that moved McNeill to third. Sandy Hawthorne was intentionally walked and stole second, leaving batter Devan Valoroso with one thought: don't strike out.



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"I came up and was nervous, but I figured 'I have to make contact,' " she said.

Valoroso chopped a ball to short for what looked like the third out, but the ball was thrown past first and both runners scored.

"I'm a slapper, so it puts pressure on the defense," Valoroso said. "And Nicole had worked hard so we had to repay her, 'cause she was pitching her butt off."

Ehlinger began the bottom of the 10th with a strikeout and groundout. With two strikes on the third batter, she floated a high, slow changeup to the plate. It was a pitch that looked too good to lay off but also was too good to hit.

Strikeout No. 22. Dominance.

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