



Crean Lutheran falls short in battle with Salesian

BY TIM BURT

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IRVINE - Crean Lutheran's baseball team had outscored its first two opponents in the CIF Division 6 playoffs, 27-0. But the Saints were held in check by Salesian on Friday afternoon in the quarterfinals at Crean Lutheran.

Saul Garcia went the distance limiting No. 2 seeded Crean Lutheran to three hits, leading Salesian to a 2-1 victory over the Saints.

Garcia struck out six, including two of the last three Crean Lutheran batters.

Crean Lutheran was hoping to reach the semifinals for the second year

in a row.

Crean Lutheran (22-10) pushed across a run in the bottom of the first inning when **Paul Sardo** walked with the bases loaded. But the Saints left the bases loaded when Garcia retired the next two batters.

"We had a big opportunity early in the first inning," said Crean Lutheran coach **Jake Haney**. "You could tell the pitcher wasn't quite settled in, but the right fielder makes a really nice diving play and it kind of took the wind out of that inning.

"And then he got in a rhythm after that. He was getting early count outs and his change-up was huge for him today. Towards the end of the game, he stated throwing more fastballs and surprised us a little bit with some fastballs."

Salesian (15-9) tied the score with a run in the second inning when **Edmond Rosas** delivered an RBI single off of starting pitcher **John Swenson**.

The Mustangs took a 2-1 lead in the third inning when **Patrick Pena** scored from third on a balk. Pena had walked, stole second and gone to third on a ground out.

"It's unfortunate the winning run ended up scoring on a balk," Haney said. "I just didn't see it. I don't think he did anything differently he had done in any other pitch.

"But those are the breaks, that's the way the game goes and we would have had to score again anyway and we didn't do it."

Garcia was dominant after that. He allowed just two hits in the final six innings and no Crean Lutheran runners got past first base.

Sardo came on to pitch in the fourth inning and blanked Salesian for 22/3 innings. **Alex Erwin** started the seventh and walked the first two batters.

Matt Markus, who picked up the 9-0 win Tuesday against Santa Paula with six shutout innings in a starting role, came on and struck out the next three batters.

Salesian was held to five hits by the four Crean Lutheran pitchers.

"Our pitchers stepped up huge," Haney said. "You can't look back and pinpoint one thing aside from the balk. I've been around the game long enough to see weirder stuff than that."

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