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# Martin's fly rallies Verdugo to victory

**By DAMIN ESPER**  
Correspondent

Scott Minkler dove, but couldn't come up with Damon Martin's shallow fly ball, allowing Victor Ramirez to race home with the winning run with two outs in the bottom of the seventh inning to give the Verdugo Hills American Legion baseball team a 5-4 victory over Burbank Wednesday at Foy Park in Burbank.

Jason Chandler went the distance for the victory. Tom Phillips was a hard-luck loser. Both teams are 1-1.

Martin's hit came after Ramirez singled in Henry Fernandez with the tying run. Fernandez had reached on an error by shortstop Mario Joy. Both runs were unearned.

Verdugo never led in the game until the end. Burbank had jumped out to a 3-1 lead before Verdugo battled back. The change in Verdugo's fortunes coincided with the removal of Burbank starter Mike Rossiter. Rossiter struck out six and gave up only one run on four hits in four innings.

Burbank coach Ray "Pops" Moore explained that he removed his starter because "Rossiter hasn't recovered from the grueling (high school) season yet. He hadn't pitched in a while and now we just want to save him."

Verdugo coach Kelly Magee was ecstatic to see Rossiter relieved.

"We just couldn't hit him. When they

took him out, I felt good."

Alain Carnero was charged with protecting the lead. John Rogers greeted him with what appeared to be an ordinary single to center. But the ball apparently hit a sprinkler and skipped by Steve Knezevich. By the time Knezevich got the ball, Rogers had a triple.

Fernandez knocked in Rogers with a single to center. Robb Turner walked and one out later, Ramirez lined one to the left of third baseman Jeremy Sparks. Sparks should have been able to play the ball but was slow getting over and never got his glove on it. Fernandez came home with the tying run.

Burbank reclaimed the lead in the sixth when Sparks led off with a bloop double to left-center. He was wild pitched to third before Brian Gordon was hit by a pitch. Tony MacCaughtry lifted a sacrifice fly to score the run. Gordon stole second and third, but Knezevich struck out and Joy grounded out and the lead remained 4-3.

Phillips had come on in the sixth with nobody out and James Yoder on first. After Yoder was caught on a failed bunt attempt, Phillips struck out Cal Frost and got Rogers on an infield grounder.

Fernandez led off the seventh by sending a grounder to Joy. But Joy kicked the ball and Verdugo was still alive. Phillips struck out Turner and pinch hitter

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## Verdugo

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Scott Von Loss Berg, wild pitching Fernandez to second in the process.

With the left handed hitting Ramirez next, and an open base, Moore went out to the mound to ask if Phillips wanted to put him on. "He felt he could get him," Moore said. "If I could do it again, I would have walked him."

Ramirez made Burbank pay with his game-tying single to center. That set the stage for Martin. With a full count and Ramirez breaking from first, Martin lifted the ball behind shortstop. Joy had no chance to get to the ball so it was up to Minkler. He got his glove on it, but it fell in and Verdugo's players raced onto the field to celebrate.

Chandler picking up the victory for Verdugo was a story in itself. Chandler pitched for Burbank High where Kelly is his pitching coach. With Rossiter on the Burbank squad, Chandler didn't figure to get as much work as he wanted. So Kelly offered Moore the rights to June Kwong, Jeff Kadis, Ozzie Areu, and a player to be named for the rights to Chandler and Willie Rivera.

The trade was a steal for Verdugo. Chandler struck out nine and hit a batter. His only walk was intentional. He scattered seven hits, and with a couple of breaks, might have sailed to an easy win. "He very well could have pitched a shutout," said Kelly. "We gave them three runs. I had no thought of removing him."

Burbank jumped out in the first with a run when Phillips, went to second on a groundout, beat a throw to third on a grounder hit by Sparks, and scored on a single by MacCaughtry.

Verdugo got even in the second. Josh Canale tripled into the gap in left-center and scored on a wild pitch.

Sparks put Burbank back in front in the third. With one out, he lined a shot into right-center for a triple. As he was chugging into third, second baseman Sammy Vaguera threw the ball wild trying to cut him down. Sparks scored easily on the error.