



Cowboys hammer big rival Foothill

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Posted: 04/22/2009 09:10:36 PM PDT

Updated: 04/22/2009 10:50:20 PM PDT

LIVERMORE — The Livermore High softball team has operated with a bit of a chip on its shoulder all season.

The Cowboys knew the reputation of their main rival, Foothill, and they knew the Falcons were the ones they'd have to beat even to think about an East Bay Athletic League title.

On Wednesday, the Cowboys not only took one big step toward that goal, but they also did it in the most emphatic fashion possible.

Livermore scratched out two runs in the third inning and then broke the game open with six in the fourth to beat visiting Foothill 8-0 at Ernie Rodrigues Fields at Robertson Park in Livermore.

With the win, the Cowboys now have sole possession of first place in the EBAL.

Livermore (15-2, 7-0 EBAL) used its usual small-ball approach to get on the board in the third.

With runners on second and third, Brittany Sabatini laid down a perfect squeeze bunt, scoring Stephanie Gilbert. When Foothill first baseman Kristy Ortiz tried to come home to get Gilbert, the ball squirted away from catcher Erica Tabler, allowing Katie Keller to score from second.

That mini-outburst served only as an appetizer for

a hungry Livermore offense. The fourth inning was where it made its biggest mark, scoring six more runs and sending 10 batters to the plate. Sabatini provided the highlight, doubling in two runs with one out.

"When we got those first two runs with small-ball, I think that fired us up," Livermore coach Bill Keller said. "I think the key to our success today was scoring first."

Foothill (12-5, 6-1) couldn't respond to the Cowboys' offensive barrage, sending only the minimum six batters to the plate in the final two innings. Jessica Varady pitched the first five for Livermore, and Sammy McConvey pitched the final two of the shutout.

"They made plays, and we didn't. They kept the gas on, and we didn't keep making plays," Foothill coach Matt Sweeney said. "We got beat. They punched us in the nose pretty good."

Livermore pounded out 10 hits, led by Katie Keller's two doubles and a single. After scoring 28 runs in five games at the Livermore Stampede, the Cowboys have one of the hottest offenses in the East Bay.

"I think we came out really fired-up and ready to play, and we know how (Foothill pitcher) Keri Ball pitches," Katie Keller said. "We hit the ball very well and played great defense."

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