

Season Recap | August 9, 2019

That's a Wrap!

The San Diego League puts the finishing touches on a successful inaugural season.

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SAN MARCOS – A exciting summer of baseball filled with home runs, walk-offs, drama, and stellar pitching performances has come to an end for the San Diego League. Starting from Opening Night in May to Championship Sunday in August, the inaugural 2019 SDL season spanned nine weeks with a total of 77 regular season games, an All-Star Game and three games on Championship Sunday.

Looking to distinguish themselves from all the other baseball summer leagues across the country, the SDL's focus was to provide the ultimate developmental experience to their athletes who are looking to take their game to the next level.

In the SDL's first season, they decided to partner up with Blast Motion and Rapsodo Pitching to further enhance the developmental experience for their athletes. By incorporating these two tools, SDL hitters and pitchers are able to utilize detailed analytics to help improve their game.

With the emphasis on player development, SDL athletes are able to develop in the weight room as well and through the league's partnership with CSUSM and 1RM Performance, they are able to utilize the university's workout facilities and training regimes to the fullest.

These athletes ranged from incoming college freshmen, current college students from junior colleges and four-year universities. This diverse group of baseball players filled out the first four teams in the SDL's first season: Hooks, Jets, Long Boarders and Warriors.

The Long Boarders finished in first with a record of 27-8, which included a 10-game winning streak, the longest in SDL history. In second-place came the Jets, who had a record of 18-16-1. The Hooks came in third with a 16-18-1 record and the Warriors finished in fourth with a 13-22 record.

This past season, the four SDL teams did not just compete against each other, but against other interleague teams as well. In 14 combined games against the Sunset Baseball League's Solana Beach Redbirds and Western Baseball Association's San Diego Reign, SDL teams boasts a commanding 12-2 over their interleague opponents.

The SDL recognized two players for their outstanding performance this past season. Drake Pierson of the Long Boarders earned Player of the Year honors while Scott Anderson of Jets earned Pitcher of the Year honors.

In 34 games, Pierson led the league in batting with a .400 average and had 32 hits in 80 at-bats. Pierson is also tied for the league lead in home runs (3), and has 18 walks, 30 runs scored, 29 RBIs and 11 stolen bases.



The San Diego League would like to thank each of their corporate partners and everyone else who made the inaugural season a success. A memorable 2019 summer comes to an end as the SDL prepares for next year's 2020 season. (Kevin Dahlgren/San Diego League)

Scott Anderson pitched in seven games this season for the Jets and compiled a 4-0 record with 18 strikeouts and allowed 11 runs (seven earned) in 29 $\frac{1}{3}$ innings pitched. Anderson was also the league leader in ERA with 2.15.

Aside from Pierson, Long Boarders' Taylor Meaux and Ethan Paulson, along with Jets' Ryan Cho each have three home runs for a four-way tie for the home run lead. Warriors' Carlos Oquita had 41 hits to lead the league, while Cho leads the league in RBIs (37).

On the pitching side, four players tied for the league lead in wins. Long Boarders' Michael King and Ryan Schroeder, Warriors' Chase Martinez and Hooks' Connor Kinney each totaled five wins on the season. Warriors' Taiyo Konishi racked up the most strikeouts this season with 51 K's and Dylan Vaughn is the season's saves leader with six.

The Long Boarders finished the season and led in the league in plenty of offensive categories: highest team average (.289), hits (338), home runs (14), RBIs (248) and runs scored (309). The Boarders also had the lowest team ERA at 4.69, while the Jets led the league in strikeouts (286).

It would not be a baseball season without an All-Star game, as the SDL debuted two new teams for the ASG; the Waveriders and the Tribe. The Waveriders were consisted of All-Stars from the Warriors and Long Boarders, while the Tribe had a mixture of All-Stars from the Jets and Hooks. Friends, families, the SDL's partners, Blast Motion and even MLB scouts in attendance witnessed a 17-10 victory by the Waveriders in the league's first-ever All-Star Game.

Once the All-Star Game festivities ended, playoffs began for all four SDL teams. In the opening round, the Hooks knocked out the Warriors, 10-3, behind Jansen Lublin's complete game one-hitter and advanced to the semifinals to face the Jets.

In the semifinals, Jets eliminated the Hooks, 11-5, with the help of a Kyler Crone's three-run home run and a quality start by the league's Pitcher of Year, Scott Anderson.

This set the stage for an unforgettable championship finals between the top two teams, the Long Boarders and the Jets. It was back-and-forth game from start to finish, but at the end of the day, only one team was left standing.

The Jets defeated the Long Boarders, 13-12 in extra innings to become the inaugural SDL Champions. Not only did the Jets made history, but so did Kyler Crone. With his game-tying inside-the-park home run in the ninth, Crone became the first person to hit two home runs in one day.

There is not only success on the field, but off the field as well. With help from the SDL, some players were able to commit and sign on to play at four-year universities across the country. Players such as Stephen Rausa (Baker University), Niko Diaz (Cal State Marcos), Dylan Moran (Cal State Monterey Bay), McKlane Elgin and Bailin Markridge (Clarke University) are just a few names who will be taking playing careers to the next level.

With the first of many seasons in the books for the SDL, there were plenty of partnerships who made this a successful first year: Cal State San Marcos, Rapsodo, Rawlings, Blast Motion, Prime Sports, California Glove Engraving, 1RM Performance, Canyonside Cages, SoCal Surf Lessons, Chiropractic and Pain Relief of San Diego and the San Diego Union Tribune.

As the 2019 season comes to a close, the SDL prepares for next season, and will return to the diamond in summer 2020. Until then, keep up with all the offseason news at www.thesandiegoleague.com for updates and information about next season.