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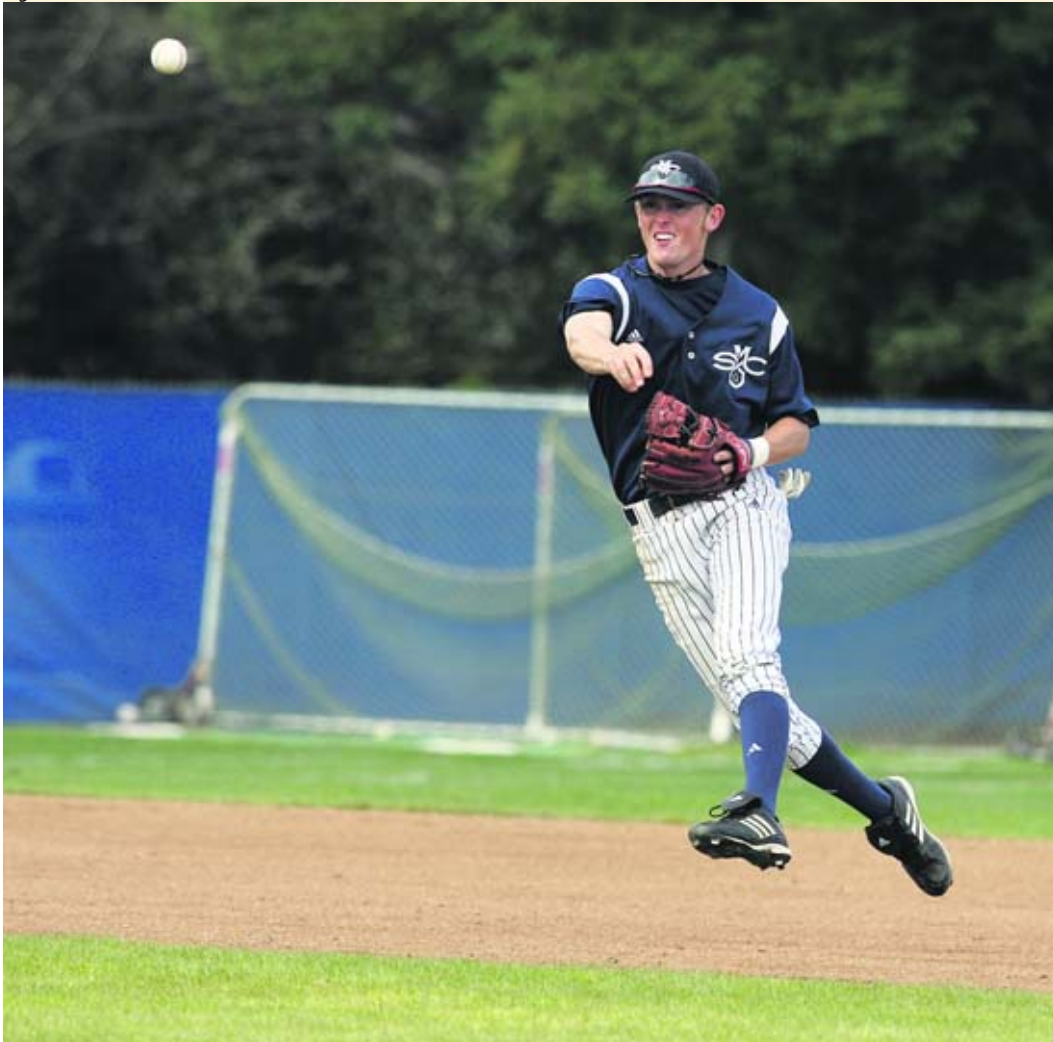
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## Justice is Served as Jensen has his Day

By Kevin D. Shallat



Freshman Shortstop Chris Murphy Photo Tod Fierner

After losing five out of their last six conference games, the Saint Mary's Gaels baseball team looked to right their ship in a home series against the 24th ranked Toreros of San Diego on Friday, April 17. The Gaels squeezed in a non-conference win over UC-Davis after the losing streak, but its conference record had turned this challenging weekend against a top team into a must win series.

The Gaels received a workman-like performance from Brian Justice on the mound, and also got a breakout performance from their cleanup hitter, Kyle Jensen, after an admittedly slow start in conference play. Jensen was instrumental in helping the Gaels win the first game of the series after going 4-5 with three doubles and a home run. Saint Mary's ran away with the first game of the three-game series, beating the University of San Diego 14-4.

You couldn't ask for better weather in Moraga to start the series, but there was an abundance of pollen seeds floating in the air, causing almost whiteout-type conditions.

Saint Mary's third baseman, Troy Channing, was hit by a pitch twice in this game, but still managed to score two runs, record an RBI, and maintain a .387 average, which is tops on the team. This freshman from Foothill High has already tied the Saint Mary's single season home run record with 15 home runs. He also leads the nation in home runs, RBIs, slugging percentage, and total bases for a freshman.

Justice (6-2) may have had better days on the mound for the Gaels, but he was able to eat up six strong innings, giving up only four earned runs in the process. Justice did give up 11 hits in this game, but pitched all six innings without a walk.

Perhaps the most stressful inning for the Gaels came in the top of the first inning, when USD had runners at first and third with no outs. Right fielder Jensen caught a fly ball in right field and threw a one-hop bullet to catcher Ryan Mulligan, who tagged out the runner who was trying to advance from third base.

With a clear scoreboard, the Gaels were able to relax at the plate, and their patience paid off. Saint Mary's got off to a 4-0 lead after only two innings. In the bottom of the first, Aliotti hit a leadoff double that caromed off the center field wall. Channing then reached first base after being struck by a pitch and Jensen followed that up with a three-run homerun over the right field wall. San Diego's designated hitter, Mike Lugo, hit a solo homerun in the top of the fifth to cut it to 4-1, but that's as close as USD would get.

After the game Jensen acknowledged that this was a must-win series for the Gaels, but also stated that they are not looking too far ahead, "We just want to win at least two of the three games in this series, that's our goal."

And that's what happened. Saint Mary's won the series, 2-1. The Gaels won the second game by a score of 5-3, but dropped the final game by a score of 9-7.

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