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By RUSTIN WATT • Daily Leader

When the Cal Ripken league tournament began on Friday, there was one team almost everyone counted out. Despite what others thought, there were at least nine who believed they had a shot and that was all they needed.

In the end, the A's pulled out a come-from-behind win, 8-7 in the 10th inning.

But the Cardinals didn't roll over, forcing extra innings in a comeback of their own.

The A's came into tournament play winless on the season, and the Cardinals came in as the first-place regular season champs. The Cardinals had to fight back through the loser's bracket after losing to the A's Saturday.

Though they came in on opposite sides of the spectrum they both met up Sunday for the same thing, but not in their usual location.

Sprinklers failed to shut off during the night, and Rosel Field flooded. The game was moved to Diamond No. 2 at the softball complex.

The Cardinals won 8-2 to force the "if" game, and each team put it all on the line.

The Cinderella story A's — David — went 10 innings against the expected winner and season champion Cardinals — Goliath — and came out on top in truly an epic little league championship battle, 8-7.

Cal Ripken A's go from worst to first during tournament

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In the top half of the second inning the A's were able to scrap a couple of runs together to take the lead off of Garrett Rogers, and Sylman Pando RBIs, 3-1.

The Cardinals were quick to answer in the bottom half and scored on an Eric Gomez RBI single and an Eduardo Rosales two RBI double, and took the lead, 4-3.

There the score would stay for three innings. Then the A's came up to bat with the championship on the line in the top half of the sixth, in a six-inning contest.

Edwin Pineda led the inning off with a double, then David Gomez popped out, but the Cardinals attempt to double up Pineda went awry, and he advanced to third base. The nine-hole hitter came up big in Garrett Rogers who was able to connect and drive in the game-tying RBI. Sylman Pando popped out next in the order and the Cardinals turned two off of it.

The A's tied the game up 4-4, and went into the bottom half looking for a hold and a trip to extra innings.

After two outs Diego Zavala got a base hit and stole second and third to be in prime-scoring position. Eduardo Rosales was next in the order and hit a grounder past the pitcher up the middle, but shortstop Sylman Pando fielded it on the run and threw a dart to first base and the game moved into extra innings.

Dylan Shellenburger popped out to lead off the seventh, then Angel Archuleta connected for a single. Lorenzo Pando then stepped in and ripped one for an RBI triple. The Cardinals then were able to turn two again and went into the bottom half down 5-4.

They were able to tie.

The Cardinals loaded the bases and Lorenzo Pando walked in a run.

With their nine-hole hitter up to bat the Cardinals went for the win on an attempt to steal home but it was denied as A's catcher Angel Archuleta made a quick catch, block, then tag, and once again the game needed another inning to decide a winner with the game tied after seven, 5-5.

The A's were unable to score a run in the top half of eighth but the defense held strong to keep the Cardinals from getting anything going, and the teams headed into the ninth inning tied 5-5.

With two outs Archuleta stepped in for the A's and took one for the team to get a runner on base for Lorenzo Pando. Pando once again found a way to score Archuleta who stole second after getting beamed.

Pando hit a single, then a throwing error scored Archuleta, and the A's took the lead. A couple of errors followed, which allowed Pando to cross home, and the A's went to the bottom half of the ninth up 7-5.

Servando Avila was able to connect in the bottom half for a two-out RBI double for the Cardinals to bring the A's lead to one, 7-6. Eric Gomez made contact and hit what seemed to be a routine pop fly, but lack of communication in the outfield led to a drop and the Cardinals were able to tie it up once again, 7-7, and force another inning.

David Gomez started off the 10th inning for the A's and worked the count for a walk. Garrett Rogers then hit into a double play and the A's had no runners on with two outs.

Lead-off man Sylman Pando was up to bat and was walked, he then stole second. Dylan Shellenburger then hit a roller to the usual human- vacuum Cardinal third basemen, but in a rare Cardinal miscue, the ball made its way to shallow left which allowed Pando to score and gave the A's an 8-7 lead.

The Cardinals started out with a walk, but then a pop-out behind the dish and a laser throw from catcher Lorenzo Pando to first base turned into two outs for the Cardinals. A grounder to

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sure-handed shortstop Sylman Pando ended the game, 8-7, and the once winless A's celebrated, dumped the water cooler on their coach, and walked away as league tournament champions after a 10-inning, nearly 3-hour, Cal Ripken classic.

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