

The scene was set. At the ballpark on a beautiful spring evening. The forecasted rain was a no-show, the heat of the day was being offset by a vigorous breeze blowing out to left field and the scattered cloud cover would help the right fielders who had to face directly into the blinding setting sun. The stands were filled with excited fans, the players were warmed up and ready, and the home plate meeting with managers and officials had concluded as Ronda Gunther led everyone in singing The Stars Spangled Banner. It was all systems go: it's playoff time - let's play ball!

Although their records for the season were not spectacular on paper, Argyle Dental and Safelifts would be competitive with any other team, and here they were in the playoffs ready to prove that to everyone.

As they say, 'the proof is in the pudding' and the game started with lots of pudding. SafeLifts, as visitors, attacked the batter's box. Singles by Aasha Jones, Tim Jeske and Bryan Bravard, plus a double by Johnny Blecher and two walks enacted the 5 run rule, side retired.

Argyle Dental came to bat with equal enthusiasm, Debbie Hinson, Mike Flatt, Jim Hupp, Greg Alexander and John Martin singled, and Coco Ondina doubled producing 4 runs.

After one, SafeLifts 5 and Argyle Dental 4.

In the second, Ken Ford (double) and Mike Lorenc kept the charge going, and then a string of base on balls yielded two more runs for SL (SafeLifts).

The most exciting moment in the bottom of the second came when Jeff Vaca made a flying leap to catch a long ball hit to deep left field. Jeff crashed to the ground and rolled over a few times, but then from this tangled mess of arms and legs his arm shot up in the air like a

rocket with a bright yellow orb grasped securely in his glove for the third out. It was just like in the movies and worth the price of admission. Sadly for Argyle that was the only excitement and the inning ended....

After two, Safelifts 7 and Argyle Dental 4

The fireworks continued for SL: Jeske doubled and Johnny B. hit a three bagger. Adding to that, singles by Ford, Lorenc and Burke moved runners around the bases for 5 more runs and the 5 run rule applied again.

About this time, Argyle started praying for that forecasted rain that was nowhere to be seen on the horizon, as they seemed to have lost their mojo, 3 up and 3 down.

After three, SafeLifts 12 and Argyle Dental 4

Despite the disparity in the score there was plenty of action on the field and a crack team of officials, with John Basse at home, Kevin Buckrucker at first and Bob Riley at third were kept more than busy. There were several close calls, which this blue shirt team promptly resolved with professionalism and accuracy. Mike Conley, the BIG blue shirt, who had dragged himself out of sick bay, was proud to see his team officiating at the highest level.

SafeLifts certainly had it going and they had no plans of letting up. They continued to rock the batter's box with hits by Joe Boudreau, Theresa Tucker, Jones, Wissink, Jeske, Blecher and Curry, putting another 5 runs on the scoreboard.

While Argyle had given up on hoping for rain, it didn't mean they were ready to wave the white flag. They tried to get a rally going in the fourth, with hits by Alexander, Jaensch, Martin and Kaker, but good defense kept the runners from advancing.

After four, SafeLifts 17 and Argyle Dental 4

While the hoped - for rain would not fall from the sky, there is the old saying 'that when it rains it pours' and that is how Argyle must have felt, because the LS hitting barrage just didn't let up to start the fifth inning. Five hits by all aforementioned players brought in another 3 runs for SafeLifts.

Things did not improve for Argyle, 3 up and 3 down.

After five, SafeLifts 20 and Argyle Dental 4

Just in case you weren't aware of it, THERE IS NO MERCY IN SOFTBALL. Yes, you guessed right, the unrelenting attack by SafeLifts rolled on and on and on.... Seven hits put another 5 runs on the scoreboard, limited only by the 5 run rule. Who is responsible for this great performance you ask? Well actually the whole team, with some special mentions for Aasha Jones (4 – 4), Tim Jeske (4 – 4), Johnny Blecher (4 – 4), Ken Ford (4 – 4), Mike Lorenc (4 – 4) and Jim Burke (3 – 4).

It had to be a rough day for Argyle and by the sixth inning they were definitely behind the eight ball, but in spite of the situation there was no quit on this team. Debbie Hinson (3 – 3) led off with a hit followed by hits from Jim Hupp and Coco. Greg Alexander blasted a shot to deep left field for a triple and 2 RBIs. Greg then scored on a hit by Mike Yaensch, but the scoring ended at three runs.

After six, SafeLifts 25 and Argyle Dental 7

After conferencing, the officials called for a flip / flop buffet inning, meaning SafeLifts would stay on the field and Argyle would continue batting without a 5 run rule restriction. But the drought continued for Argyle without any additional scoring.

## Final Score, SafeLifts 25 and Argyle Dental 7

It goes without saying that SafeLifts was definitely impressive and deserving of the win. I don't know if anyone could have beaten them today, they were just firing on all cylinders and their bats never cooled off. Argyle is a good team that had a bad day. They may feel discouraged now, but it is important to keep in mind that one game does not define a season and next season is just around the corner.

A special shout out to Jackie Fox for keeping the scorebook and to Gary Warrick operating the scoreboard. They did a great job keeping track of all of the hitting and scoring during such a game with so much action. And finally, a big thanks to Peter Day on the microphone. He kept us informed and when the score became depressing he lightened the mood with music, trivia and wit. It was a fun night for all, maybe more fun for some than for others, but it is always a good day at the ballpark, spending time with friends and old cronies, and yes that means you Kelly Petre.