

SPORTS / GENERAL SPORTS

## Mesa CC wins both games of softball doubleheader with Chandler-Gilbert CC

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The Mesa CC Thunderbirds are hitting .327 as a team this season.  
*Scott Mammoser*

The **Mesa Community College** softball team swept both games of a doubleheader over **Chandler-Gilbert** at home Tuesday, 5-1 and 7-6, with the team rallying down two in the bottom of the seventh in the second game. The Thunderbirds improved to 20-27 and 16-24 in the **ACCAC** (ninth place of 13), while the last-place Coyotes fell to 4-32 and 4-35.

"I'm pleased with the kids and the resiliency to fight back," MCC coach Grady Moorhead said. "I don't feel like we played our best softball today, but our pitchers pitched well enough to win and our hitters came out clutch when it mattered. Every break didn't go our way."

Korynn Molina drove home Valerie Macias, and a double from Natasha Mercado scored Molina and Kayla Bradford to give the Thunderbirds an early 3-0 lead in the bottom of the first. Two more runs scored in the fourth for MCC, as it survived a bases loaded double play, and the Coyotes added one in the top of the sixth to avoid the shutout.

Chandler-Gilbert scored first in the second game, as Adela Martinez knocked an RBI triple, then was scored by Amber Casarez in the top of the first. The Thunderbirds tied it in the bottom of the first when Allyea Elwell drove home Brittney Ramos and Bradford. The Coyotes' Arianna Zambrano scored Hailee Siroky with a two-out double in the third for the 3-2 advantage.

In the bottom of the sixth, MCC scored two more runs, first on a deep double from Bradford, scoring Macias, and secondly from a Ramos double to left with two outs. The Thunderbirds were in position for the win in the top of the seventh, when Martinez's triple with two outs and two strikes scored two runs to put the Coyotes ahead 5-4. Martinez then scored when the catcher lost control of the ball, for the two-run lead.

With one out in the bottom of the seventh, MCC's Lexi Valencia scored Keileen Padilla. Then, with the bases loaded and two outs, Bradford drove home the tying run, and Amanda Hernandez was walked home to end the game.

"The second game was probably one of the craziest games I've ever been a part of," Moorhead said. "We took it one pitch at a time, and we did a good job of not pressing and not trying to do too much because that was kind of a thorn in our side.

"Our goal at the beginning of the year was to get a little better every day. Today we learned a lot about ourselves as a group, and that put us in the right mind set. We have to deal with pressure, is one of the things we're working on, so we're getting better."

MCC's next games will be a doubleheader against Scottsdale Community College at noon on Saturday, and the Coyotes are at Glendale at the same time. The Thunderbirds' top hitters on the year are Ramos at .423, Molina at .401, Leighann Ballesteros (.350), and Bradford (.336).

"It was a team effort," said Bradford, a sophomore outfielder from St. David, Ariz. "We're impressing a lot of people. At the beginning of the season, people didn't have a lot of confidence in us, but as we're playing, people are starting to believe that we can beat anyone."