

## Snapshots

### BOCA RATON

# FAU students perform at Band-O-Rama in Mizner Park



PHOTOS BY JENNIFER LETT/CORRESPONDENT

Kyle Prescott, director of bands at Florida Atlantic University, signals for quiet while students plays a version of the famous "Jaws" score at FAU's Band-O-Rama, an annual free pre-Thanksgiving concert, at Mizner Park Amphitheater.



FAU's Marching Owls prepare for their entrance.



FAU's Wind Ensemble, chamber ensembles, Jazz Band and the Marching Owls performed.

### WEST BOCA

# Veterans Day ceremony at Memorial Park honors those who served



Above left, Charles Epstein gives the invocation at a Veterans Day observance at Palm Beach County's Veteran's Memorial Park. Above right, students in three military cadet organizations and Boy Scout honor guards parade in with flags at the start of the ceremony.



PHOTOS BY MARTA MIKULAN MARTIN/CORRESPONDENT

## Sports

# Cobras strike to capture first county middle school softball title

BY GARY CURRERI  
Special correspondent

Boca Raton Middle School captured the first county softball title in the school's 49-year history with a 10-5 victory over host Wellington Landings.

The Cobras finished 3-7 the past two seasons, but cruised this year with 12 straight wins after dropping its season opener.

"I knew we had a different combination of players," said Boca Raton coach Barbara Vlahakis, whose team literally went from worst to first.

Boca Raton topped Emerald Cove (Wellington) in the quarterfinals, and Christa McAuliffe Middle (Boynton Beach) in the semifinals en route to the decisive showdown. Wellington Landings defeated defending county champion Duncan Middle (Palm Beach Gardens) in the quarterfinals and Independence (Jupiter) in the semifinals to earn its finals appearance.

"This was a closely bonded team," added Vlahakis, whose teams' best finish previously at the school was a semifinal game against Christa McAuliffe. "They were terrific and an amazing group of girls. Everyone contributed in one way or another."

Boca Raton scored in the top of the first inning on a bases-loaded walk to Bella Santos that scored Adrianna



GARY CURRERI/CORRESPONDENT

Boca Raton shortstop Bella Santos throws to first base against host Wellington Landings in the Palm Beach County middle school softball championship game. The Cobras won the first county softball title in school history.

Portanova. Wellington Landings (12-1) answered in the bottom of the frame when Emma Brinkmann hit a two-out single and scored on a double by Stephanie Funk.

The Cobras regained the lead in the second inning when Jetzebell Callens came around to score on an error. It was only the third

time all season that Wellington Landings trailed in a game.

"It's amazing," said Santos, 13. "... after we lost the first game of the season 10-3 to Loggers Run, I wasn't expecting all of this. We just got together and said it was one game and we were going to let that one pass and we did. We have grown so

much since last year."

Boca Raton broke the game open with five runs in the fifth inning via three hits and two walks as Chloe Kreuz, Portanova, Sophie Kreuz and Sarah Green all came around to score.

The Cobras plated three more runs in the top of the sixth inning.

"We ended the year with

a bang," said Green, also 13. "The heart and how much excitement the girls had really showed this year. They all really wanted to get better. It was pretty amazing to see how far everyone has come."

Added Portanova, 13, of Delray Beach: "We were really motivated this year especially after that first

loss. This is really big. I think we will remember this for a long time since it was the school's first county championship."

The Gators attempted a comeback with four runs in the bottom of the sixth inning. They capitalized on two walks and four consecutive hits with two outs. Nicole Gumula, Kaitlyn Campbell and sixth-graders Jennifer Gormley and Angelina Mangini all scored.

Brinkmann and Funk each had two hits for the Gators, which won county titles in 2009 and 2013.

Brinkmann, 13, said softball is a big part of her life. Both of her sisters (Chelsea and Isabella) also played which got her interested in the sport.

Gumula, also 13, said she fed off the crowd, especially in the championship.

"It felt great to play softball," Gumula said. "It was an amazing experience. I am going to remember the really good relationships I've made. It's my life."

Carter McMasters was in his third season coaching the Gators. He's 31-5 during that span.

"I try to keep it like a club and build relationships that can last for years to come," McMasters said. "We got beat by a good team. Our bats got hot at the very end. Hats off to them. They executed ... they made the plays."

Sportscm5@aol.com