

# George School softball captures Friends School League title

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Bucks County Courier Times

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Posted May 16, 2018 at 8:20 PM

## Mihalik scores winning run in the 9th inning as Cougars capture first league softball title since 2003.

JENKINTOWN — It was a hard game to top for drama.

Amber Salazar's infield liner with one out in the bottom of the ninth scored Caitlyn Mihalik from third base and gave George School a 2-1 win over The Academy of the New Church on Wednesday evening in the Friends School League softball championship game in front of a rain-soaked audience at Abington Friends.

It's the first FSL softball title for the Cougars (13-2) since 2003.

The winning run was unearned. With one out in the ninth Caitlyn Mihalik reached base on a dropped fly ball to left. She moved to second and then to third on consecutive wild pitches by ANC's Stevie Murphy before Ada Wagar walked to bring Salazar to the plate.

The junior third baseman was focused on the task at hand. "I was thinking 'I just have to do it for my team'," she said. "We've come so far, we've worked so hard and I had to do it for them."

Salazar's focus was on target; she smacked a hard line drive at Lion second baseman Julia Shriver, who couldn't hang on but was able to keep the ball in front of her. She made a good throw to the plate but too late to catch Mihalik, who slid home with the winning run.

The game belonged to the pitchers, the Cougars' Mihalik and the Lions' Murphy. Conditions were abysmal, heavy rain fell prior to the game and during the first inning. Mihalik struck out 21 batters and Murphy 15. Conditions were extraordinarily tough for hitters and both pitchers benefited from a strike zone that was pitcher friendly. But both were sharp.

The two teams combined for just three hits.

“It was hard,” Mihalik said. “(ANC) is a very good team, we played them (twice) before. It was a tough game every time. With my team behind me it was easier. They were a big part of it.”

The second-seeded Lions (11-3) scored in the first when Caitlin Irwin walked with one out. She came all the way around to score on a sacrifice and an error.

The top-seeded Cougars were stymied until their last regulation at bat when Mihalik led off with a double to deep center. Wagar followed and missed on a two-strike bunt attempt but the ball hit the ground. She was thrown out at first but Mihalik came home with the tying run.

Cougar coach Terry Scullion was confident in his team when the season began but admitted they exceeded even his own expectations.

“I thought we’d be in the playoffs,” he said, “but I wasn’t sure we were there yet. But all year, the girls got better. That was our goal, get better every day.”

**Notes:** Both teams will take part in the Pennsylvania Independent Schools tournament. George School will travel to Academy of Notre Dame on Friday.