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San Mateo County's homep

Krook carries Hillsborough to tourney win

By Emanuel Lee, Daily Journal Correspondent



Matt Krook walked off the field with his head down, his eyes revealing a look of sadness.

The kid shouldn't be too hard on himself. Krook tossed a career-high 5 2/3 innings, and Nick Waldsmith had another great hitting night as Hillsborough defeated Belmont-Redwood Shores 6-1 in a winner's bracket game in the 9 and 10-year-old District 52 Tournament on Friday at Highlands Park.

Hillsborough, which has been the runner-up in this tournament in each of the last two years, plays a pivotal game against San Carlos today at 2 p.m. The winner of that game advances to the championship round,

where it would only have to win one game in a best-of-three series against a team working through the loser's bracket. Belmont-Redwood Shores plays an elimination game on Sunday at 2:30 p.m. All of the tournament games are at Highlands.

Krook had never gone more than four innings during his brief career, but when Hillsborough head coach R.J. Waldsmith asked him before the game if he could go four innings, Krook said yes. The lefty did a lot more than that. Mixing a two-seam fastball with a wicked change-up, Krook allowed just five hits and one run before tiring in the sixth inning. It was a sparkling 94-pitch effort that Waldsmith said wasn't the best of Krook's career, but one of his guttiest.

"I was disappointed (that I couldn't close it out)," Krook said. "I just got really tired at the end."

"Matt really didn't have his best stuff," Waldsmith said. "That's the scary thing — he could pitch better. He actually struggled at the beginning and got stronger as the game went along. I'm really proud of this team for the way they're playing together and how much fun they're having. This was a huge win because you want to stay in the winner's bracket, although we did that last year and Palo Alto beat us twice for the championship. But like I said, win or lose, this is a great group."

Indeed. On this night, there wasn't a prouder father/coach than Waldsmith, whose son, Nick, Hillsborough's starting second baseman, went 4 for 4 with two runs scored and two RBIs.

"That was great," R.J. Waldsmith said. "He had a rough start when he was picked off second base at the start, and sometimes kids at these age get down if something like that happens early in a game. He's been hitting like that all tournament and it definitely was one of his best hitting games."

Belmont took a 1-0 lead in the bottom of the first when Corey Pang, who had singled with one out and advanced to second base on a wild pitch, scored on Matt Gorgolinski's single. Belmont produced three of its five hits in this span and had runners on second and third with two outs, but Krook recorded a strikeout to get out of the jam. From there, Krook set Belmont down in relatively easy fashion before he walked two batters in the sixth. Devyn Jackson came on to record the final out.

The game was tied at 1 when Hillsborough broke things open with a four-run, fifth-inning. Frankie Ferrari led off with a double and Chris Baker singled. Waldsmith followed with an RBI single to plate Ferrari, and Baker scored moments later on a Belmont throwing error. Waldsmith scored on a wild pitch before Evan Finney's run-scoring double capped the outburst. Finney went 2 for 2, Ferrari finished 2 for 3 with two runs scored and Henry Caruso added an RBI single in the third.