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San Mateo County's homep

Hillsborough champs

By Nathan Mollat, Daily Journal Staff



It's a good thing the home plate umpire didn't ask Devyn Jackson's opinion on his championship game-winning slide home.

"I thought I was out," Jackson said, referring to his one-out run home in the bottom of the sixth inning of the District 52 championship game yesterday.

Fortunately for the Hillsborough 9- and 10-year-old all-star team, Jackson was called safe, giving Hillsborough a 12-11 win over San Mateo National and the District 52 title.

Hillsborough moves on to the Section 3 tournament in Fremont beginning 5:30 p.m. Friday against District 67.

The win was the first for manager R.J. Waldsmith, who was an assistant coach on teams that lost in the championship game the last two seasons.

Waldsmith was confident his team could win, but ...

"I lost the championship two years in a row as a coach," Waldsmith said. "I wasn't taking anything for granted."

Jackson's game-winning run capped an exciting back-and-forth affair that saw both teams rally from deficits. San Mateo, which won four-straight games and advanced to the championship series through the consolation bracket, had won

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Yes No Not Sure

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its last two games after overcoming deficits of 3-0 and 6-2. Those wins had the San Mateo team loose and confident.

“They don’t realize the situation or the magnitude of what’s going on,” said San Mateo manager David Villar. “They’re just out there playing baseball.”

The game was an offensive slugfest. Hillsborough scored 12 runs on 12 hits while San Mateo rapped out 11 hits for its 11 runs.

The difference came down to defense. Hillsborough committed three errors while San Mateo had four — two in the final inning.

“We made a lot of errors,” Villar said. “More physical than mental.”

Hillsborough, which hadn’t played since beating San Carlos in the winner’s bracket final on Saturday, scored three runs in the bottom of the fourth to tie the game at 11. After being set down in order in the fifth, Hillsborough scratched out the game winner in the sixth, helped by two San Mateo errors.

With one out, Patrick Lynch reached first on an error. Jackson came in to pinch run and moved to second on a Frankie Frankel single. Leadoff hitter Chris Baker, who was 3 for 3 with two doubles and three RBIs, came to the plate and hit the first pitch he saw to the San Mateo shortstop. The ball went through the shortstop’s legs and trickled into shallow left field.

Jackson never stopped as he rounded third. The San Mateo left fielder fired a strike to the plate, but a bit high. The catcher could not get the tag down in time and the game was over.

“I’m very glad (third-base coach) Irv Holmes sent the runner,” Waldsmith said. “I like to be aggressive on the basepaths and in that situation, with one out, I figured go for the championship.”

San Mateo put the pressure on Hillsborough right away, scoring a run in the top of the first when Gunnar Johnson singled home Justin Villar, who reached base on an error.

San Mateo made it 2-0 in the second when Andrew Vollert scored from third as Hillsborough appealed to second, arguing that Vollert left the bag early on a flyout.

Hillsborough got on the scoreboard with a four-run second to take a 4-2 lead. The first four batters reached safely to lead off the inning. Baker had an RBI double and Matt Krook added a run-scoring single. Two more runs scored on a San Mateo error.

San Mateo responded with a four-run third, taking a 6-4 lead. The first five batters of the inning reached base with Vollert driving in a run and Blake Peters plating a pair. The fourth run came by way of an error.

Back came Hillsborough with a four-run third of its own, taking back the lead, 8-6. After a one-pitch out, Hillsborough strung together five-consecutive hits. The big blow was a Krook two-run double. Baker and Nick Waldsmith each added an RBI as well.

San Mateo shrugged off the inning and retaliated with a five-run fourth for an 11-8 lead. Back-to-back singles and a walk loaded the bases and Devin Gilmore drove in two runs with a single. Vollert added another RBI single. With two outs, Adam Leary hit a ball to third base, but the throw got by the first baseman, allowing two more runs to score.

Hillsborough tied the score with three in the fourth. Waldsmith had a two-run double and Baker added his third RBI of the day.

“These guys take a lot of pride in what they do,” R.J. Waldsmith said. “They don’t like to lose at all.”

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