

Hillsborough trounces Tracy

By Emanuel Lee, Daily Journal Correspondent

FREMONT — Joe Holmes stood by the dugout as some of his teammates passed by.

“Great job Joe,” one said.

“Way to go Joe,” said another.

Holmes' coach, Hillsborough manager R.J. Waldsmith, was effusive in his praise for his star right-hander.

“He's one of the greatest kids you'll ever meet,” Waldsmith said. “Nice, polite, well-mannered. I treat him like one of my own.”

Holmes was the one person on everyone's mind after he delivered another unforgettable performance. His two-hit gem propelled the Hillsborough 9- and 10-year-old All Stars to a 7-0 win over Tracy National in the quarterfinals of the Section 2 Tournament Friday at Marshall Elementary School in Fremont. Hillsborough plays in a winner's bracket semifinal today at 10 a.m. against an opponent to be determined. Holmes, who threw a dazzling one-hitter in a 10-0 win over San Carlos two weeks ago in a District 52 winner's bracket semifinal, was even better this time around.

Mixing a fastball with a nasty change-up and cutter — “They were all working today,” he said — Holmes carried a perfect game into the bottom of the fifth inning, when he allowed consecutive singles to Tanner Turner and Clark Moniz. But Tracy National's Alex Valencia was called out for interference in the batter's box, and Holmes got Dan O'Brien to line out to second baseman Nick Waldsmith, who alertly threw to first for a double play after Moniz strayed too far off the bag.

How dominant was Holmes? The precocious 10-year-old threw only 54 pitches — 45 went for strikes.

“I never knew I could do this,” said Holmes, who finished with seven strikeouts. “This is the best I've ever done. I thought the Tracy lineup was going to be really tough, but I showed my best stuff today. This is just a great, amazing feeling. The defense was awesome and this team is just phenomenal.”

With a rotation that includes Holmes, Matt Krook, Devyn Jackson and Patrick Lynch, Hillsborough finds itself in the enviable position of having most of its starters rested for a title run. On Friday, Holmes got plenty of support from a Hillsborough lineup that pounced on Tracy starter Jonah Wesely, who seemed to tire as the game went on. Wesely went the distance, throwing 125 pitches. Holmes led off the second with a single, but Wesely struck out the next three batters and seemed to be in control.

It wouldn't last. Hillsborough scored four runs in the third inning and three more in the fourth. Frankie Ferrari led off the third with a single and Chris Baker walked before

Waldsmith reached on an error, loading the bases.

Henry Caruso and Holmes followed with RBI walks, and Robby Dean capped the uprising with a two-run single. Baker doubled with one out in the fourth and scored on Waldsmith's double. Krook followed with a run-scoring double to the center-field fence, and he scored moments later after Tracy committed consecutive errors.

Waldsmith produced three of Hillsborough's nine hits. He had two doubles and a single, to go along with two runs scored. Baker and Krook also scored two runs each, while Ferrari went 2 for 3. In addition to his exploits on the mound, Holmes reached base in all four of his plate appearances.

"Amazing," R.J. Waldsmith said of Holmes' effort. "When your pitcher pitches that well, what can you say? Joe has been best friends with Nick since they were 3. He was at my house today at 10 a.m., and I wouldn't let him swim because I didn't want him to get tired. He's grown up loving baseball and he has good mechanics. The umpire came up to me and said that my pitcher was putting it right where the catcher is. So far, we've been fortunate in that we haven't had to go deep into our pitching staff. When the starters are doing that well you have to go with them, but I have kids coming up to me and asking, 'When can I pitch?' I've coached a lot of teams, but this one is the most special. I would coach them forever if I could."

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WP — Holmes. LP — Wesely. 2B — Waldsmith 2, Baker. 2 hits — Ferrari. 3 hits — Waldsmith. 2 runs scored — Baker, Waldsmith, Krook. 2 RBI — Dean.
