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Hillsborough continues march

July 11, 2007, 12:00 AM By Nathan Mollat, Daily Journal Staff

Since losing a heart-breaking 6-5 loss in the first round, the Hillsborough 10- and 11-year-old All-Star team crushed its opponents on its way to the consolation finals of the District 52 tournament against San Mateo American Tuesday at Highland Park in San Carlos.



Nathan Mollat / daily Journal
Hillsborough's Andrew Segre slides safely into home for his team's third run of the first inning as San Mateo American catcher Kevin Hahn waits for the throw.

San Mateo American proved to be little more than a speed bump for the locomotive Hillsborough team. Hillsborough scored three or more runs in four of the five innings on its way to a 16-3 win and a spot in the championship series against Foster City.

"This has been a long grind. They've cranked off six in a row," said Hillsborough coach Jeff Cozad. "They're seeing the ball really well."

Hillsborough wasted little time scoring runs. It scored three in the first and second innings, one in the third, three more in the fourth and put the game away with a six-run fifth. Brendan Barrows did the most damage, driving in three runs with a bases-loaded walk and a two-run double to the left-field corner. His brother Gordon Barrows reached base three times and scored three times. Andrew Segre singled in his two at-bats, driving in two runs while his replacement Charlie Boyd reached base twice, scored twice and drove in a run. Grant Goodman drove in a pair and scored three runs for Hillsborough as well.

San Mateo American looked like it would make a game of it early. After Hillsborough scored three in the top of the first, San Mateo responded with a run in the bottom of the frame on a Christian Conci RBI single. Hillsborough increased its lead to 6-1 with three in the top of the second but San Mateo came right back with two in the bottom half on a two-run home run by Michael Valdez.

San Mateo limited Hillsborough to just one run in the third but the tide of the game turned in the bottom of the frame. Brendan Barrows came on to pitch the bottom of the third and was virtually untouchable. In 2 1/3 innings of work, Barrows faced eight batters and struck out six.

"I've coached him for years," Cozad said of Barrows. "It was unusual to see him strike out so many tonight. He's a contact pitcher."

What makes the Hillsborough story even more intriguing is the fact that it is the exact same team (minus one) that won the District 52 and Section 3 titles last year and advanced to the state tournament.

"They've played a lot of games together," Cozad said. "A lot of these kids have been playing together since they were 6, 7, 8 years old. They've played in a lot of tournaments."

Their familiarity with each other and the success the team experienced last year may have contributed to its 6-5 loss to Highlands in the first round of the tournament.

"Frankly, (I think they were) a little arrogant," Cozad said of his team in that first game. "I don't think they really understood how hard they had to work to get to the state championship (last year). They didn't have that focus or killer instinct that first game. Since then, I'm going to guess we've scored 80 runs. Our opponents, about 14."

Hillsborough will meet Foster City in the finals for the second year in a row, although the roles are reversed. Last year, Foster City came through the consolation bracket but came up short against Hillsborough.

Hillsborough hopes for the same results this year.

What do you think of the Board of Supervisors' decision to not place a measure on the ballot allowing voters to decide between district and county-wide elections for supervisors?

- The current county-wide system is working fine
- There should be district elections to allow for more competitive races
- Either way, it should be up to the voters

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"It's kind of poetic," Cozad said.

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