

# SAN MATEO DAILY NEWS

Jul 29, 2007

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Saturday Jul 28

## Hillsborough all-stars cruise to win

19 hits push 10- and 11-year-olds to Division II tournament victory over Saratoga

By John Reid / Daily News Staff Writer

SAN JOSE - Hillsborough manager Jeff Cozad juggles the Nos. 5 through 7 hitters in his lineup as if he were the main act in a circus. But, no matter whom Cozad sends to the plate, they almost always have a productive at-bat.

The way Hillsborough swung the bats in a 13-8 win over Saratoga in the Division II Little League 10-and-11-year-old All-Star Tournament at Branham Hills Little League field Friday, it had to have Saratoga reeling somewhat.

Hillsborough collected 19 hits, seven in a seven-run second inning to surge ahead 7-1. Saratoga committed three of its four errors in the inning, leading to three unearned runs.

"Hillsborough is a fantastic team," Saratoga manager Bob Johnson said. "They really timed our pitcher's fastball and we had to adjust."

"We're starting to feel more comfortable," Cozad said. "We got one under our belt the first game and we played better (tonight)."

Hillsborough will feel real comfortable if it can get past Benicia today at 3 p.m. in a winner's bracket game. A victory by Hillsborough sends it to Wednesday's title game, hammer in hand.

Benicia defeated River Park-Fresno by way of a 6-0 forfeit after it was ruled the River Park starting pitcher had thrown over the 85-pitch maximum. The game was stopped by the umpiring crew with River Park up 6-3 in the fifth inning. River Park plays McKinleyville today at 12:30 p.m. Saratoga tries to bounce back against Woodcreek today at 10 a.m.

Saratoga tallied seven of its eight runs in the final three innings to make the score closer.

Chris Zapata doubled to right-center to lead off the sixth. KJ Carta-Samuels greeted reliever Brenden Barrows with a line drive home run over the center field fence, and Saratoga trailed 13-6. Braden Curry singled off an infielder's glove, then Bobby Withanage did the same. A ground out by Jared Spang got one run home. Thomas Alexander's single scored another run as the Saratoga fans chanted "Two-out rally!"

The fans of Saratoga had to be credited for not giving up. And they had to be jacked up about Davis Berryhill's solo jack that cleared the center field screen by a good distance in the bottom of the first for a 1-0 Saratoga lead.

Hillsborough starter Henry Caruso allowed a single to right to Ryan Johnson on an 0-2 count, but settled down to retire the next seven hitters, fanning three of them. Caruso made a tremendous defensive play when he snared Spang's searing liner in the bottom of the third.

Stephen Ruff drilled the first of two doubles inside the third base bag to ignite a two-run fourth inning for Saratoga. Ruff scored on one of six wild pitches by Caruso. Johnson, who had singled, scored on a rare 9-3 fielder's choice play with Barrows, who was playing in right, throwing out CT Galvin at first base.

Hillsborough did not make an error in the game and has made just one in 12 innings of the tournament.

"Hillsborough is a great defensive team," Bob Johnson said. "They are disciplined defensively."

Hillsborough warmed up at the plate in the second inning. Charlie Boyd had a line drive single before Austin Marcus found the gap in right-center for a double. Andrew Schmitt's hustle-double drove in two runs.

Chris Mark made it three straight doubles, knocking in a run with a shot into right-center. Mark had two doubles on the night, scoring three times while batting out of the eighth spot. After Gordon Barrows was hit with a pitch, Caruso, who had three hits, singled in Mark. The ball got past the right fielder which enabled Barrows to score and Caruso to go to second. The throw came into the plate, which got Caruso to ramble off second about four yards. Ryan Johnson pegged out Caruso at second with a fine throw to Ruff.

Gordon Barrows delivered a two-run single in the third, while Grant Goodman's double flirted with the right field fence and added a run in the fifth. Brock Cozad's bad-hop single in the sixth plated the final two runs of the night for Hillsborough.

Caruso threw 70 pitches and struck out the side. Should Hillsborough win today, Caruso could get the ball in

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Wednesday's title game.

"Caruso threw a great game," Bob Johnson said. "His curveball was the pitch that was getting us out."

"I pitched pretty well," said Caruso, who is 5-for-7 in the tournament thus far. "I just did what I normally do."

So far, so good for Hillsborough, which has skipper Jeff Cozad juggling a masterpiece as his team won its 13th straight game.

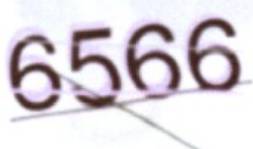
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