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# PALO ALTO DAILY NEWS

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Sunday Jul 29

## Hillsborough waltzes into D-II title game

By John Reid / Daily News Staff Writer

SAN JOSE - Because Benicia was threatening to protest Saturday's Division II Little League 10-11-year-old All-Star game with Hillsborough in the bottom of the fourth, a phone call went to San Bernardino, site of the Western Regional Majors Tournament, to get a ruling. When the verdict didn't satisfy Benicia manager Mark Hanson-Regalado, a longer distance call was made to Williamsport, Penn., site of the Little League World Series. Williamsport upheld the call and the protest was withdrawn, but the point was really moot.

The delay merely stalled Hillsborough's historic 4-inning 17-4 triumph. The victory not only put Hillsborough in Wednesday night's title game, it meant that this Hillsborough team has ventured farther than any Hillsborough Little League all-star team before it. Hammer-wielding Hillsborough will play either River Park-Fresno, Woodcreek-Roseville or Benicia, which plays Monday's River Park-Woodcreek victor on Tuesday. River Park destroyed McKinleyville 33-0, while Woodcreek eliminated Saratoga 6-5 in a taut contest.

"You never know what can happen," Hillsborough manager Jeff Cozad said. "Any team can make it to Wednesday."

Whichever team meets Hillsborough Wednesday night will have to bring some quality arms. Hillsborough's aluminum is ablaze with 48 hits for 38 runs in 15 innings of tournament play. Right after Henry Caruso singled in the second inning, an elderly man got up from his seat in the stands and said, "That Hillsborough team really swings the bat. They have a bunch of hitters on that team."

Right on cue, Grant Goodman took the first pitch he saw from Kyle Blakeman and belted it for a three-run homer. It was the first and only home run Hillsborough has hit thus far in the tourney. Hillsborough went on to score five more times in the inning to go up 11-1.

Goodman certainly earned his postgame meal. He singled and scored in the first, then doubled in a run in that lengthy second inning when Hillsborough sent 13 batters to the plate. Goodman reached first on an error in the top of the fourth, eventually scoring his third run of the game.

On the mound, Goodman was dominant at times in his 3 2-3 inning stint, allowing just two hits. Goodman struck out the side in the first, totaling seven strikeouts, before giving way to Frankie Ferrari in the fourth. Goodman, who threw about 80 pitches, is unavailable to pitch Wednesday, but is a nice insurance policy should Hillsborough lose Wednesday night.

"Goodman didn't even have his best stuff," Cozad said. "That was more of a grinding game for him."

Once again, Cozad had the Hillsborough hit machine turned on. Caruso continued to make the tournament his own with three more hits, including a double. Caruso is 8-for-11 with six runs scored in three games. Brock Cozad had his second two-hit game in a row and added two RBIs. Ferrari knocked in a run with a long double in the fourth. Charlie Boyd singled in two runs in the fourth frame and had three RBIs for the game. Austin Marcus doubled, while Chris Mark had three hits and two RBIs. Mark was denied a third run-batted-in when Marcus was thrown out at the plate in the third inning on a close play.

"The kids are more confident this year," Jeff Cozad said. "They were really focused on the drive down to the park. They expect to do well. I had hitting up and down the lineup. It was just another day at the office."

A historical day at the office, at that.

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