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- As soon as possible
- I'll wait a week after my ballot arrives
- I'll wait until closer to the election
- Election Day

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Belmont holds on

July 06, 2012, 05:00 AM By Nathan Mollat, Daily Journal Staff

The Belmont-Redwood Shores 10-11 All-Star team scored six runs in the first two innings and then held on to beat Hillsborough in a winner's bracket semifinal game at Red Morton Park in Redwood City Thursday evening.

"We got some key hits to give us an early lead," said Belmont manager Rudy Lopez. "We threw our best and [Hillsborough] battled. We got them at the end."

With the win, Belmont moves into the winner's bracket finals where it will face Menlo-Atherton at 10 a.m. Saturday at Red Morton Park. Hillsborough falls to the consolation bracket and will need to win three games if it wants to advance to the championship game.

Hillsborough will wonder what could have been if it only could have capitalized on three bases-loaded situations. Hillsborough loaded the bases in the top of the first, fourth and sixth innings but came away empty each time.

"You can't leave the bases loaded three times (and expect to win)," said Hillsborough manager Brendan Murphy. "They knew they had their chances."

Despite trailing for a majority of the game, Hillsborough had a chance in its final at-bat in the top of the sixth. Trailing 6-3, Hillsborough plated one run on a Quincy Daniels RBI single to left. After Belmont reliever Nicolas Lopez struck out the next two batters, William Lawrence drew a walk and represented the winning run. Blake Todzo followed and laced a drive to right field. He was mere inches away from clearing the bases, but Belmont right fielder Zach Wong made a stabbing, backhanded catch to end the game.

It wrapped up a full-circle game for Hillsborough, which started and ended the game with the bases loaded. Hillsborough began the game with back-to-back singles from Patrick Dudley and Jack Damelio in the first inning and then got a walk from Aaron Murphy to load the bases against Belmont's hard-throwing starter Sean Lee. But Lee induced a comebacker and threw out the lead runner at the plate for the first out of the inning and then got a grounder to second baseman Ryan Anderson, who threw out a second runner at home for the second out. Anderson ended the inning by getting a bloop behind second base and stepping on the bag for the inning-ending forceout.

Belmont took advantage of the momentum swing by taking a 1-0 run in the bottom of the first. Anderson led off the game for Belmont with a double to the corner in left field and he came around to score on when Dominic Susa smoked a double that short-hopped the fence in left field.

Hillsborough continued its hot start and finally broke through with a pair of runs in the second to take a 2-1 lead. With two outs, Ethan Parness drew a walk and Dudley singled. Both pinch runner Tucker Tollmann and Dudley moved up a base on a wild pitch and both came home on Damelio's single to right, with Dudley colliding with Susa at home, where the catcher dropped the ball at the moment of impact and Dudley reached around to touch the plate.

It would be Hillsborough's only lead of the game as Belmont put up a five-spot in the bottom of the frame. Taylor Douglas led off the inning with a single and pinch runner Josh Fong scored on Zach Wong's single to right.

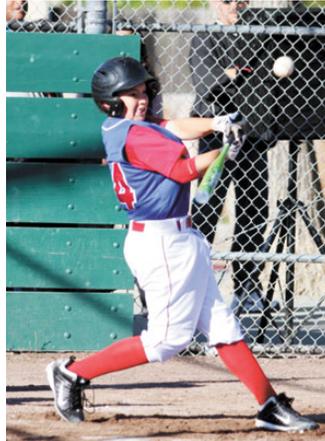
Then Belmont broke out the big sticks. Following a groundout, Lopez came to the plate and on a 1-1 offering, deposited an opposite-field, two-run blast to right. Lee followed with a walked and Susa jumped on a 1-0 pitch and parked it over the fence in right-center to put Belmont up 6-1.

"He's tough," Rudy Lopez said of Susa. "He's seasoned. The moment is never too big. He loves being the man."

Turns out Susa's shot was the game winner as Murphy came on in relief of Quincy Daniels had held Belmont scoreless the rest of the game, pitching four innings of no-hit ball.

Hillsborough cut the lead to 6-3 with a run in the fourth when Keane Blundell, who had doubled, scored on a Murphy single. After striking out the next batter, Lee was done for Belmont, having reached the mandated Little League pitch count for the game — 85.

In came Belmont's co-ace, Lopez, who had a hard time finding the strike zone, but ended up keeping Hillsborough in check with minimal damage. Lopez allowed one run on two hits, but he walked four. Both Lee and Lopez combined to strike out eight Hillsborough batters.



Nathan Mollat/Daily Journal Belmont's Dominic Susa belts a two-run homer in the bottom of the second of his team's 6-4 win over Hillsborough. Susa drove in three runs for Belmont.

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