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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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New champ crowned

July 12, 2012, 05:00 AM By Julio Lara, Daily Journal Staff

The District 52 Little League Majors championship has shined with the red and blue of Hillsborough eight of the last nine years. It's a mountain they've owned; a kingdom they've ruled with an iron fist.

That is until 2012. At least for this year, there is a new king and he wears a Foster City All-Stars jersey.

Behind the phenomenal pitching of Dominic Monozon and a pair of clutch hits, Foster City beat Hillsborough 3-1 to capture their first District 52 Majors title in 20 years.

"It feels great," said Foster City head coach Steve Sutter. "I've been doing this for five years. We've been champing at the bit to get this. The kids have played their butts off for five straight games. It's unbelievable how well they've played. Pitching, defense, timely hits, it's incredible. I've never seen them play better."

The road to Tittletown wasn't easy but Foster City sure made it look that way. In five games, the black and teal outscored their opponents 32-6 and had to beat the reigning champions twice.

"That's makes it extra sweet," Sutter said. "I've been telling the boys earlier that, they've (Hillsborough) got the reputation. We want to knock them off the mountain top. When we were worried about who we were going to play today, I said 'we want Hillsborough.' We want to beat the best. We knew they're the best."

"It feels good," Monozon said, "because it's just been so hard through it all."

Monozon knows a little something about overcoming adversity. On Saturday, the right hander lasted only 30 pitches, failing to find his groove in a game against San Mateo American.

"I told him, 'you're going to come back at some point. We're going to need your arm' and tonight he stood up." Sutter said of Monozon. "Sixty pitches in six innings against that team? That's huge. He's pitched a bunch of big games for us. His season as it were, has been up and down. He's had a little trouble mechanically getting him dialed to where he's throwing downhill."

Monozon didn't look like a pitcher who's struggled at times. In fact, the game started with all the makings of a pitchers duel as Hillsborough starter Justin Moore mowed down Foster City in the first, striking out the side but using 27 pitches to do so.

Monozon came out in the first and, after surrendering a double to Henry James, got a little help from his defense with a 4-3-5 double play. The twin-killing was a sign of things to come. The bottom of second ended in double play fashion as well on a great catch in right field and subsequent throw to first.

The Foster City bats awoke in the third. Parker O'Regan led off with a single and Chris Fung followed with the first of two huge hits for the black and teal — an opposite field double to left field that set his team up with two runners on with no one out.

"He's been doing that the whole tournament," Sutter said of Fung. "Wherever the pitch is thrown, he hits it."

Tommy Ghirso drove in the first run of the game on a smash to shortstop and Kevin Jacobs cashed in another run on a sacrifice fly to right to make it 2-0.

Monozon made the lead stick in the third, getting out of a potential two-run Hillsborough on a pretty defensive play, throwing from his knees to gun down a swinging bunt attempt.

The former champs finally broke through in the fourth after Moore stroked a one-out double to left. He came around to score on a Trace Tamarro fielder's choice to make it 2-1.

But with Hillsborough hanging on to this new found momentum, it was Foster City who quickly seized it right back. Ghirso led the bottom half of the fourth off with a home run to left center field to regain the two-run advantage.

"That two-run lead made [Hillsborough] change their perspective," Sutter said, "because now they need two so they're going up there to swing for home runs [in the latter innings]. It was huge."

With his offense staking him to that two-run advantage, Monozon pitched brilliantly the rest of the way, steering the long-awaiting championship cruiser to Foster City shores.

"I felt good," Monozon said. "I got a little wild at times, but I just made a few adjustments and settled myself down. I wasn't hitting my spots, so I had to finish down more and just get a little more velocity on the ball. My defense was great. They came up with I needed them."

Leading the defensive charge to end the game was O'Regan, who made two great plays at shortstop to top the championship sundae with the proverbial cherry. With a runner on, James smacked a ball up the middle that O'Regan snagged and flipped to second for the pretty force out. Then, Moore lined a ball to short that O'Regan caught on the fly then threw to first to get a wandering James for the final out.



Nathan Mollat/Daily Journal Foster City's JJ Ota tags out Hillsborough's Henry James to complete a 4-3-5 double play in the bottom of the first inning during his team's 3-1 win in the District 52 Majors title game.



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