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Hillsborough takes 9-10 district title

July 10, 2015, 05:00 AM The Associated Press

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Dan Gilmartin, manager of the Hillsborough 9-10-year-old All-Star team, had a plan at the beginning of the District 52 tournament: to be the visiting team as often as possible.

The way Hillsborough has swung the bat, it was a smart move. Hillsborough scored double-digit runs in three games on its way to the 9-10 championship game against Pacifica American at Ortega School in Pacifica Thursday evening.

While Hillsborough failed to score 10 runs for the first time in the tournament, it had more than enough to beat Pacifica American 7-1.

It's Hillsborough's first 9-10 district title since 2010. It now advances to the Section 3 tournament in Livermore beginning next week.

"It was our strategy to be visitors," Gilmartin said. "We wanted to bat first."

That strategy paid off in spades Thursday as Hillsborough jumped on Pacifica with four runs in the top of the first. While the Pacifica pitching stabilized, with three relievers combining to allow three runs over the final five innings, the damage was done.

Gus Parker led off the game with a walk and went to third on a Seamus Gilmartin bloop down the right-field line. Casey Platkin got Hillsborough on the board when he reached on an error and Parker scoring on the play. Following a popout, Dylan Kall walked and Whitaker Tollman hit into a fielder's choice to load the bases. Matthew Dougherty Jr. came up and on the first pitch hammered it into the left-center field gap to clear the bases and give Hillsborough a 4-0 lead.

"That was a tough way to start," said Pacifica manager Nate Uter. "We were just a little shaky."

After that, it was a lot of Dean Moss on the mound and defense for Hillsborough. While Pacifica managed to get base runners all game long, Moss wiggled out of trouble — due in large part to his defense.

Moss pitched 4 2/3 strong innings, allowing one run six hits. He got defensive help right away, however, to get out of a first-inning jam. With two outs and Dylan Russell on first, Gino Venturi cracked a double to right to put runners on second and third. Ashton Jones followed and hit a hot shot to Hillsborough second baseman Andrew Rocha, who initially managed to only knock the ball down. He stayed with it, however, and got Jones at first by half a step to end the inning.

"He never gave up and stuck with the play," Dan Gilmartin said of Rocha.

In the bottom of the third inning, Hillsborough left fielder Sam Goligoski made the play of the game. With Pacifica having already scored once, it was looking to add more with runners on first and second. Evann Smith came up and singled to left. Goligoski fielded the ball and with the runner from second rounding third and heading home, Goligoski threw a two-bounce strike to catcher Platkin, who held for the out to end the inning.

"That was a huge momentum change, for sure," Dan Gilmartin said.

Hillsborough took that momentum to the plate in the top of the fourth inning, getting the run back. Dylan Kall hammered a ball off the fence in center field for a RBI double, with pinch runner Tollman scoring on the hit for a 5-1 Hillsborough lead.

Hillsborough then added two more runs in the top of the fifth — a RBI double from Parker which scored Rocha, and a RBI single off the bat of Seamus Gilmartin which scored Parker.

Seamus Gilmartin was 4 for 4 from the plate.

Pacifica scored its lone run in the third when Dylan Uter walked, went to third on a Jordan Tosetti single and scored on a Jones fielder's choice.

"We just expect to score runs," Nate Uter said. "Moss threw a great game."

Pacifica also had a web gem of its own in the top of the seventh inning when right fielder Anthony Wierzba gunned out a Hillsborough runner at first to end the frame.

"It was a tough one. It's hard to win with one run," Nate Uter said. "[Hillsborough] just outplayed us today."

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Carol Lambson · Hillsborough, California
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