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## Hillsborough moves on to state tourney

July 22, 2015, 05:00 AM By [Terry Bernai](#) Daily Journal

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Hillsborough is once again the class of the Section 3 Little League 9-10-year-old All-Stars.

After winning its sixth all-time District 52 championship, Hillsborough captured the Section 3 title Monday night at Livermore's Robert Livermore Park with a 12-7 win over Union City.

Starting pitcher Matt Dougherty Jr. earned the win, allowing seven runs (two earned runs) through 2 2/3 innings. But it was right-hander Dean Moss who emerged in relief to carry Hillsborough to victory.

Moss last threw three days previous in Hillsborough's dramatic 12-10 semifinal win over Danville. As the starting pitcher in that one, Moss' curveball wasn't sharp, and he lasted just one inning. He bounced back Monday, however, firing 3 1/3 no-hit innings, allowing just one base runner on a fourth-inning fielding error.

"In district play, he was a gem," Hillsborough manager Dan Gilmartin said. "Then to close it out, he was back to his normal self."

The Hillsborough offense exploded in the second inning to stake Dougherty to a nine-run lead, sending 13 batters to the plate. The first nine batters of the inning reached safely, including a big two-run triple by Kevin Macy to get Hillsborough on the board.

For Macy, Monday marked his first start with the All-Star squad. Hillsborough carries 13 players on its roster. However, two of their players missed Monday's game due to family vacations. So, Gilmartin called upon Macy to fill the void. Macy entered into play hitless on the postseason, going 0 for 8 in six previous games. But he showed up Monday, going 2 for 2 with three RBIs.

"I noticed there were times where he was feeling a little down on himself," Gilmartin said. "Not that he ever felt like he was being cheated (for playing time), but I kept telling him his time was coming. It came and he delivered."

Union City battled back to make it interesting though, rallying for seven runs in the third inning to close Hillsborough's lead to 9-7, sending 11 batters to the plate in the frame.

With Union City proving it could put up big numbers earlier in the tournament, scoring the largest single-game total in an 18-3 win over Fremont on July 18, Hillsborough turned to Moss. And with the potential tying runs on base and two outs, the right-hander retired the side. He went on to set down 10 of the 11 batters he faced.

"Dean Moss was freezing them with his curveball," Gilmartin said. "He was freezing them so bad, the umpire even missed one and called it a ball."

Clinging to a two-run lead into the sixth, Hillsborough rallied for three insurance runs in its final at-bat. Dougherty's RBI single produced the first run of the inning. Conrad Wilbur followed with a two-run triple. Wilbur has now tripled in back-to-back games and is batting .556 (10 for 19) in the postseason.

Gus Parker is pacing the team with a .591 batting average (13 for 22), with Hillsborough hitting .408 as a team.

"We're an offensive powerhouse for a bunch of 9s and 10s," Gilmartin said.

Gilmartin said Monday's victory was Hillsborough's most authoritative performance at the plate. But the lineup's saving grace was its ability to make contact, only striking out twice in the game.

"We normally hit the ball a lot harder and lot farther, but the one thing is the kids put the bat on the ball," Gilmartin said.

Hillsborough managed to catch the District 52 competition by surprise, according to Gilmartin. He said it is par for the course for the competition to be unfamiliar with each other, as the 9-10s bracket is the first time the teams compete in district play.

"Going into the District 52, in terms of talking to everyone else's team, we were not on anybody else's radar," Gilmartin said.

That isn't to say Gilmartin didn't see the potential in his team.

"I naturally, myself, thought we had a good chance of winning District 52," Gilmartin said. "And looking back at D52 ... we rocked it. Now winning the sectionals pretty much solidifies how good this group is and how well they've gelled together."

With the Section 3 championship, Hillsborough advances to the Division 2 Northern California championship tournament in Exeter. Hillsborough opens play Saturday against McKinleyville.

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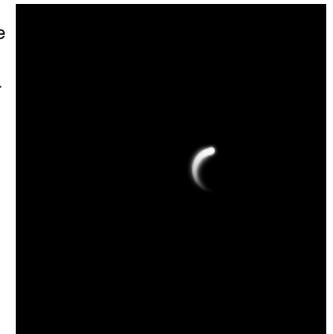
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