

FEATURED

Hillsborough 9-10s win Section 3 title

By Nathan Mollat Daily Journal Staff Jul 12, 2017 Updated Jul 12, 2017



SAN LEANDRO — If nothing else, the Hillsborough 9-10 All-Star team knew it had two shots at winning the Section 3 championship at Ashland Park in San Leandro Tuesday evening. As the only undefeated team left in the tournament, Hillsborough would have to be beaten by Tassajara Valley Tuesday and Wednesday.

For Hillsborough, however, there was no talk of a second game.

“We talked before the game about finishing the job [Tuesday],” said Hillsborough manager Ben Coughlin.

Things got a little tight in the middle part of the game, but Hillsborough pulled away over the final few innings to beat District 57 champ Tassajara Valley, 15-6. Hillsborough now advances to the Northern California championship tournament, hosted by District 2 July 22-29.

Hillsborough jumped out of the gate quickly, taking an 7-0 lead after two innings. But the game turned into a grind as Tassajara Valley eventually closed to three runs, 8-5, following a five-run fourth. But Hillsborough tacked on three more in the fifth and four more in the sixth to win going away.

“It was a tough game. We had played them earlier (in the tournament),” Coughlin said. “[Tassajara Valley] really fought hard today.”

The game took nearly three hours to complete as both teams did a good job of putting the ball in play.

Hillsborough came out swinging and kept it up for most of the game. It scored four runs in the first and sixth innings, and added three-run innings in the second and fifth. Hillsborough scored 15 runs on 17 hits.

Tassajara Valley scored its six runs on 12 hits, five of which came during its five-run fourth. It had Hillsborough starting pitcher Dillon Moss on the ropes in all four-plus of his innings, but he wriggled out trouble in the first three innings before finally being touched for three runs in the fourth.

Tuesday, he struggled with his fastball command at times, but fanned eight through four-plus innings to earn the win. Beau Schaffer came in to finish up, pitching the final two-plus innings, allowing three runs on six hits.

“[Moss] pitched well,” Coughlin said, adding Moss was making his first start since the tournament opener last Saturday. “One of the fortunate parts of our team we have pitching depth, which really comes into play in tournaments like this.”

Tuesday’s win was about the offense, however, and the top of the Hillsborough batting order did the bulk of the damage. The first six guys in the order combined for 16 hits, 14 runs and 11 RBIs.

Anakin Manuel had a monster game, going 4 for 5 with four runs scored and three runs driven in. Schaffer had a game-high four RBIs and Devin Saltzgaber drove in three runs as well.

Moss might have been better at the plate than on the mound, going 3 for 4 with three runs scored, an RBI and an intentional walk. He also made several spectacular diving plays at third base after he was done pitching for the day.

Ryan Drake had a hit and two runs scored before suffering an injury, Luke Levitt reached base four times – single, hit by pitch and two walks – and drove in a pair of runs. Ryan Shoup picked up Hillsborough’s final RBI with a bases-loaded walk in the top of the sixth.

“Our lineup, one through [six] has been very strong,” Ben Coughlin said. “But we’ve been getting contributions from everybody.”

Hillsborough’s first four batters all reached base and scored to open the game, as they sent nine batters to the plate. Manuel got the scoring started by dumping a bloop single into shallow right field. Schaffer followed with a two-run single to left and Levitt drove in the fourth run of the inning with an infield hit.

Tassajara Valley put runners on first and second in the bottom half of the first on a double by Julian Cambra and an infield hit by Brett Hennigan, but they were stranded.

In the second, Hillsborough sent 10 batters to the plate and tacked on three more runs. Schaffer, Moss and Saltzgaber had back-to-back -back RBI singles to push Hillsborough’s lead to 7-0.

It was 8-0 Hillsborough after the top of the fourth as Saltzgaber plated Moss, who had doubled to lead off the inning.

Tassajara Valley finally broke through in the bottom of the fourth, sending 10 batters to the plate. Noah Montoya greeted Schaffer with a two-run double to get Tassajara Valley on the scoreboard. Cambra drove in Montoya, while Brayden Turner and Ryder Martin picked up an RBI during the rally.

Hillsborough got some of those runs right back to thwart Tassajara’s momentum. Manuel, Schaffer and Saltzgaber each had RBIs in the fifth and in the sixth, Manuel, Saltzgaber and Shoup drove in runs.

“We had to respond (to that Tassajara rally),” Coughlin said. “I’m proud of our boys. They continued to keep hitting up and down the lineup.”