

Hillsborough 10-11s still alive for state title

By Nathan Mollat Daily Journal Staff 9 hrs ago

FREMONT — The Hillsborough Little League 10-11 All-Star Team stumbled out of the gate at the Northern California state tournament by losing its first game Sunday.

Tasked with now winning five games in five days to win the state championship, Hillsborough won its second straight last-chance bracket game, 7-0 over Porterville Tuesday evening at the Fremont American Little League complex in Fremont.

“I think we’re starting to play well again,” Hillsborough manager Doug Robbins said. “We got a little more production up and down the lineup and we got great pitching again.”

Add in six more innings of stellar defense and it equals a spot in the last-chance bracket final at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday against the loser of Tuesday’s winners’ bracket final between Almaden and Tri-City.

Hillsborough did the bulk of its damage in the first two innings, scoring twice in the top of the first and adding four more in the second. It tacked on another run in the fifth to finish with seven runs on eight hits.

Kevin Macy and Dylan Kall had the big hits for Hillsborough, with each going deep. Starting pitcher Thomas Egbert helped his own cause with a RBI single. Tyler Spitzer-Wu had a pair of singles and scored a run, Nathan Balch singled and walked, Conrad Wilbur and Whitaker Tollmann scored runs and Dean Dollosso singled. Kyle Forrest and William Robbins each drew a walk.

Hillsborough staked Egbert to an early 2-0 lead when it scored twice to open the game. With one out, Wilbur drew a walk and Macy followed with a full-count, two-run homer to right field.

“[The early lead] was huge,” Doug Robbins said. “There is nothing better than getting out (ahead) early. It lets everyone loosen up. It definitely takes the pressure off the



Kevin Macy

pitcher. Each guy doesn't have to put too much pressure on their shoulders."

Not that Egbert seemed to let anything faze him. Using a calm, deliberate approach, Egbert attacked the strike zone from the beginning. He pitched into the third inning, allowing four hits while striking out three.

"[Egbert] looked great today," Doug Robbins said. "Thomas, his last two times out, has been great."

Hillsborough opened the game up with four more runs in the second inning, taking advantage of a couple of Porterville mistakes. Balch led off the inning with a single to left and moved to second on a passed ball. Following a strikeout, Egbert came to the plate and stroked a RBI single to center to score Balch for a 3-0 Hillsborough lead.

Tollmann followed and hit a slow dribbler just to the left of the pitcher's mound. The pitcher flubbed the grounder and then compounded the damage by throwing the ball away at first. Egbert streaked around to score, with Tollmann going around to third. Tollmann scored on a wild pitch on the first offering to Kall for a 5-0 Hillsborough lead before Kall launched a solo shot over the left-field fence for a 6-0 advantage.

In the fifth, Spitzer-Wu singled with two outs, moved up two bases on a pair of wild pitches and scored when Forrest was called safe at first as the first baseman came off the bag.

After a rough start, Porterville starting pitcher Greg Franco settled down, holding Hillsborough without a hit in the third and fourth innings. Franco, despite taking the loss, finished with eight strikeouts in four innings of work.

With the Hillsborough offense taking care of business, it allowed Doug Robbins to get Egbert out of the game early. Because of the Little League pitch-count rules, Robbins had to make sure he has pitching left for a possible championship series. With Egbert's pitch count so low, he only has to rest one day, making him eligible for work in a possible championship final series.

With that in mind, Doug Robbins lifted Egbert with one out in the third inning. He was followed by a procession of Spitzer-Wu, Balch and finally Drew Lyons who finished up what Egbert started. The four pitchers combined to scatter eight hits.

“The team helped make that decision,” Doug Robbins said of how he juggled his staff. “Everyone who has come in has pitched well.”

Porterville had its chances to score throughout the game. It had a runner in scoring position in four of the six innings, including runners at first and third with two outs in the second inning and loading the bases in the fifth. Egbert got out of the second-inning jam, while Balch left the bases juiced in the fifth by inducing a flyout to center. Lyons then finished with a flourish in the sixth, getting a strikeout to end the game.

“We’re excited to still be alive (in the tournament),” Doug Robbins said. “[Tuesday] we took another step forward.”