

FEATURED

## Hillsborough adds 10-11 title

By Nathan Mollat, Daily Journal Staff 14 hrs ago



Doug Robbins, manager of the Hillsborough 10-11 All-Star team, did not know what to expect when his team assembled to face San Ramon in the Section 3 championship game Wednesday evening in Hillsborough.

As the winner's bracket winner, Hillsborough needed to be beaten twice to be denied the section title. San Ramon forced Wednesday's winner-take-all game by beating Hillsborough 5-3 Tuesday evening.

"I was curious to see how we would show up [Wednesday]," Robbins said. "[Tuesday] we were a little flat. I think maybe things had been a little too easy for us early on. You can't just show up and win."

Robbins thought his team looked more focused Wednesday and, despite falling behind 2-0 after two innings, it would take some character for Hillsborough to rally back.

And rally Hillsborough did. It tied the score with a two-run homer in the bottom of the third, then got a three-run bomb in the bottom of the fourth as Hillsborough went on to post a 5-3 victory and advance to the Northern California championship tournament in Fremont beginning July 23.

Dylan Kall got the call on the mound for Hillsborough and, while he's been sharper at times this summer, he grinded into the fifth inning. He struck out eight, but more importantly, he made big pitches when he needed them the most.

"[Kall's performance] was gutty as heck," Robbins said. "He's clutch. He delivers when he needs to."

The same could be said of Kall at the plate, where he was 2 for 2 with a walk, a double and the aforementioned three-run homer and two runs scored. Conrad Wilbur had the other big bat for Hillsborough, who went 2 for 3, including the game-tying home run in the third.

"Dylan and Conrad are kind of the heart and soul of our lineup," Robbins said.

San Ramon, however, was not going down without a fight. It put Kall in a dicey situation right away as a pair of walks sandwiched around a single loaded the bases with no outs in the top of the first.

But Kall buckled down and struck out the next two batters before getting a groundout to second to end the inning.

In the second inning, San Ramon had runners on second and third with two outs. Kall could not escape the jam this time as a Nick Fasshauer-O'Donnell single up the middle plated both runners for a 2-0 San Ramon lead.

Kall had his easiest inning in the third, retiring San Ramon in order on just nine pitches, then he got the game-tying rally started with a double to lead off the third — the first hit of the game for Hillsborough.

Wilbur followed and, on a 3-2 pitch, he got both cheeks into his swing and deposited the ensuing pitch just over fence in left field to tie the game at 2.

Hillsborough took the lead for good in the bottom of the fourth. With two outs, pinch hitter Cooper Wong reached first when the San Ramon first baseman could not handle a throw from third base. Wong went to second on Whitaker Tolmann's sharp single up the middle to bring up Kall. After taking the first pitch for a strike, the left-handed Kall turned on an inside pitch and muscled it out to right-center field for a three-run jack and a 5-2 Hillsborough advantage.

"It was a fastball, a little inside," Kall said of the pitch he hit that gave his team the lead. "It feels really good."

San Ramon, however, was not finished. It scraped together a run in the top of the fifth on a Miles Roque RBI single that ended Kall's evening.

In came Tyler Spitzer-Wu, who threw 11 pitches — five in the fifth and six in the sixth — to record the final four outs of the game to earn the save.

Hillsborough caught a huge break in that fifth, when San Ramon, with a run in, had runners on the corners and one out. With Lance Sapida at the plate, the runner at first broke for second. The Hillsborough catcher, Wilbur, gunned down the runner at second for the second out of the inning on what appeared to be a broken double steal, but the runner at third never broke. Spitzer-Wu then got some help from Tolmann in center field, who went a long way to chase down and catch a long fly ball to end the inning.

Spitzer-Wu then threw a 1-2-3 inning in the sixth to lock down the victory.