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One last chance

August 02, 2007, 12:00 AM By Emanuel Lee, Daily Journal Staff SAN JOSE - It took a little over a month and 15 games, but the Hillsborough 10 and 11-year-old All-Stars finally met their match.

Fortunately for Hillsborough, it gets one more chance to bring home a state championship. Hillsborough dropped a 10-6 decision to River Park-Fresno in Game 1 of the Division II Tournament championship round on Wednesday at Branham Hills Little League Field. The teams play a winner-take-all game today at 5:30 p.m. at the same site

Hillsborough entered Wednesday's contest on a 14-game win streak, but it quickly found itself in trouble as River Park scored five runs in the bottom of the first inning. Hillsborough countered with a four-run second. Andrew Schmitt led off with an infield single, Chris Mark was hit by a pitch and Gordon Barrows walked to load the bases, setting things up for the red-hot Henry Caruso, who cleared the bases with a triple down the right-field line.

Brock Cozad followed with a sacrifice fly to cut Hillsborough's deficit to 5-4, but that's as close as it would get. River Park scored four more times in the third, and Hillsborough never got closer than four runs the rest of the way. River Park simply outplayed Hillsborough on Wednesday

River Park is a perennial power at the 9-12 age levels, and its lineup displayed tremendous power in knocking around Hillsborough pitching for 11 hits, including two home runs, one of which was a grand slam by Drew Walters in the third. Hillsborough actually outhit River Park 12-11, but it didn't produce the key hits it is accustomed to getting. River Park also made some highlight-reel catches, usually when Hillsborough had runners on base. Hillsborough also had some baserunning mistakes. Hillsborough coach Jeff Cozad feels his team will rebound from a rare loss

"Our kids will be fine," said Cozad, whose team lost for the first time since June 30 in a District 52 opener. "Over the last couple of years they've been involved in every situation. My recap was the score was not indicative of the game. We outhit them, and they made three or four terrific defensive plays at exactly the right time

"When a team does that, you tip your hat to them. More often than not, (those type of defensive plays in key situations) are not going to happen. Anyone with a reasonably trained eye would realize that this easily could've been a one-run game. It was one of those funny nights, when we got a lot of hits but not a lot of run production. It always comes down to who makes great defensive plays and gets the timely hits, and they won that side of the coin.

Hillsborough will have all of its pitchers available today except Caruso, who started yesterday and reached the pitch count limit. Caruso, Charlie Boyd and Barrows led the way with two hits each. The last time Hillsborough lost, it went on a 14-game win streak. Now, it only has to rebound with one win to capture its first-ever state title.

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What do you think of the Board of Supervisors' decision to not place a measure on the ballot allowing voters to decide between district and county-wide elections for supervisors?

- The current county-wide system is working fine
- There should be district elections to allow for more competitive races
- Either way, it should be up to the voters











