

Ex-Giant's son belts four homers for Hillsborough Little League stars



Oakland Tribune

July 2, 2009 | Rick Chandler

BELMONT -- Eric Whitfield is a menace to the environment.

Whitfield hit three long drives into the slough beyond the centerfield fence at the Belmont Sports Complex on Wednesday -- and four home runs in all.

And for all we know, those baseballs are still floating their way to the Pacific Ocean. It would be hard to imagine a more perfect evening for the Hillsborough Little League catcher. Whitfield, the son of former San Francisco Giant Terry Whitfield, was 4-for-4 with seven RBI, and pitched 1-2/3 innings of perfect relief to lead his team to a 17-0 win over Redwood City National in a winners-bracket game of the District 52 11- and 12-year-old All-Star Tournament.

In another winners-bracket game Wednesday, Enrico Nuno threw a four-inning no-hitter and also had a home run as Half Moon Bay stopped Foster City, 10-0.

In losers-bracket games today, Foster City meets Palo Alto National at 5 p.m. and Menlo-Atherton takes on Redwood City National at 7:30 p.m., both at Belmont Sports Complex. The double-elimination event runs through July 11.

"The thing about Eric, he doesn't really swing for the fences," Hillsborough manager Ken Kammiller said of Whitfield, his No. 3 hitter, who had homers against four different pitchers. "He's all about hitting line drives. ... Eric's dad drills that into him; he drills it into the heads of all our players."

Yes, it helps to have a former major leaguer as your All-Star hitting coach. Terry Whitfield, who also played for the New York Yankees and Los Angeles Dodgers, now owns and operates Future Pro Batting Cages in Burlingame, where he has served as a hitting guru for countless Bay Area youngsters over the past two decades. Whitfield has put in countless hours with Hillsborough teams at every level, and it has paid off: Hillsborough's 11- to 12-year-old All-Stars have won the District 52 tournament four of the past five seasons, including the past two. His influence has not been lost on Gordon and Brendan Barrows, twin brothers who joined Hillsborough's hit parade Wednesday with home runs of their own. Gordon had a solo homer in Hillsborough's four-run second inning, and Brendan had a solo shot in a six-run third. They were the first-ever home runs for both. In all, Hillsborough collected 15 hits in a four-inning game called on the 10-run mercy rule. Ryan Ward had a grand slam in the third and a triple in the fourth, going 3-for-3 with five RBI. Billy Funkhouser and Nick Franco had doubles. Hillsborough meets Half Moon Bay in a

winners-bracket semifinal Sunday at 5 p.m. In Wednesday's first game, Nuno struck out 11 and walked three in four innings, with the game also being called due to the 10-run mercy rule. Nuno, Josh McKnight and Sam Vaughn all had three-run homers for Half Moon Bay, and Zane Geltman had a run-scoring single.

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