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## Hillsborough bounced

July 21, 2010, 01:11 AM By Emanuel Lee, Daily Journal Staff

FREMONT — It was an unfamiliar position for the Hillsborough 11-12-year-old All-Stars in which to be.

Instead of pounding the opposition, they were being dominated. Instead of producing the big hit, they were coming up empty. Instead of playing a clean game defensively, they committed some uncharacteristic errors. It all added up to a 13-5 loss to Tracy in an elimination game of the Section 3 tournament on Tuesday at Gomes Elementary School.

"It was a great ride," said Hillsborough's R.J. Waldsmith, who is ending his eight-year managerial run with the Hillsborough All-Star program, having spent four years with the 9-10-year-olds, one with the 10-11s and the last three with the 11-12s. "I thought our team played about as well as we could, but we just played a really good team with hard throwers. They burned their top three guys (pitching-wise), and they brought in three more guys today who probably throw faster than our top guys. It's just good pitching and good pitching always beats good hitting."

Hillsborough started section play Saturday with a tough 4-2 loss to San Ramon, which needs to be beaten twice by Tracy to lose the championship. Hillsborough went 0 for 13 with runners in scoring position, and left 11 runners on base. Unfortunately, Tuesday was a repeat performance.

Hillsborough stranded nine runners on base and more often than not, came up short in clutch situations. Nowhere was that more apparent than in the bottom of the fourth inning. Tracy had just ripped off five runs to take a 8-4 lead after Hillsborough had scored three times in the third to take its only lead of the contest.

Given a chance to respond, Hillsborough loaded the bases with one out. But a strikeout and fly out sealed its fate and Tracy scored four more runs in the fifth and one more in the sixth to win going away.

It was an impressive performance considering Hillsborough hadn't lost by more than four runs since All-Star play began. But Tracy was machine-like offensively and every pitcher it threw out there had tremendous velocity.

"They're probably the best hitting team we've faced," Waldsmith said. "I liked the way our guys battled and even at the end, I thought our guys were going to come back."

Tracy took a quick 3-0 lead in the top of the first before Hillsborough scored a run in the bottom half on a solo home run from leadoff hitter Alex Waldsmith. Hillsborough held a brief lead when it scored three times in the third, doing it in a rather unconventional way.

George Delegans and Timmy Lynch both reached on infield singles before Blake Marcus stroked a two-run double to make it 3-3. Marcus advanced to third base on a fielder's choice and scored when Riley Krook legged out an infield single to give Hillsborough a 4-3 advantage.

Whatever hopes Hillsborough had at that point were quickly dashed, however, when Tracy put up a five spot in the fourth and four more runs in the fifth. Tracy outhit Hillsborough, 17-11. Delegans led Hillsborough with three hits — all singles — while Waldsmith, Lynch and Krook added two hits each.

Despite finishing with three errors, Hillsborough received a fine defensive play from second baseman Jacob Tan in the top of the sixth. Tracy's Matt Case hit a sharp grounder that forced Tan to his left. After making a diving stop, Tan threw Case out on one knee to end the inning.

"(If we could've got a big hit in the fourth) that would've put us right back in it," R.J. Waldsmith said. "The hits we were getting before we didn't get (in our two losses in this tournament). The tide just turned a little bit."

Hillsborough played admirably to get this far. After opening up tournament play with a loss to San Ramon, it came back to beat Niles-Centerville of Fremont and San Lorenzo before losing to a superior team in Tracy. Waldsmith said there were a number of highlights to the season, but the thing he'll remember most is how the players progressed along the way.

"These guys performed better than any of us coaches could have hoped for," Waldsmith said. "They improved tremendously and it was great to see them come through consistently in important situations. We just ran out of magic at the end."



Nathan Mollat / Daily Journal Hillsborough shortstop George Delegans fires the ball across the diamond for an out during his team's 13-5 loss to Tracy in the loser's bracket finals of the Section 3 11-12 year old Little League All-Star tournament in Fremont Tuesday evening.

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