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FEATURED

## San Mateo American erupts in 11s semifinal

Nathan Mollat Daily Journal staff

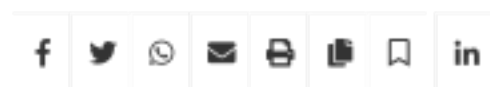
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Hillsborough shortstop Will Glasser fires to first for an out.

Nathan Mollat/Daily Journal



With the new universal batting order being employed in Little League this season — one in which every player on the roster bats — managers have a decision to make when making out the batting order.

At the end of the day, somebody has to hit last, but that doesn't mean they can't handle the bat. It was the bottom of the order that came up with the biggest hits of the game for San Mateo American as it scored 10 runs in the bottom of the third inning on its way to a 10-0 mercy-rule win over Hillsborough in the District 52 11-year-old All-Star winners' bracket semifinal at Trinta Park in San Mateo.

“We started out slow,” said American manager Jason Gordon. “Their pitcher (Mason Bautista) did a good job. He was peppering the outside corner.”

Bautista cruised through the first two innings, allowing one hit, a leadoff double

to Connor Workman down the third-base line.

But things fell apart for Hillsborough in the third, and it started with American's No. 12 hitter, Carter Weyer. He came to the plate with the bases loaded after No. 9 hitter Joe Biancalana drew a one-out walk, NO. 10 hitter Pono Rosenberg reached on an infield single deep in the hole at shortstop and Milo Werner reached on an error.

That brought Weyer to the plate.

"I was looking to get at least one RBI," Weyer said.

He did better than that. On a 2-1 pitch, he flipped an opposite-field single to right, to stake American to a 2-0 lead.

"I'm proud of the bottom of the order," Jason Gordon said. "I told them with these new (batting rules) ... you have to have guys down there who hit."

Weyer's two-run single was the first of six run-scoring hits in a row for American. The top of the order followed and Workman singled home Werner before Weyer came home on Chris Moreno's groundout to shortstop for the second out of the inning.

But Jagger O'Brien kept the rally going with an RBI single to center and Matthew Ward followed with an RBI-triple to right, that got past a sliding attempt from the Hillsborough right fielder, to put American up 6-0.

Hillsborough went to a reliever, but it was more of the same. William Meza greeted the new pitcher with a sharp RBI single to center to end the run of consecutive RBIs.

But American wasn't done scoring. Maddox Stone and Hudson Wong both drew walks as American batted around and reloaded the bases to bring up Cody Gordon, the 13th batter of the inning.

Gordon had led off the frame with a groundout to shortstop, but the outcome for the No. 9 hitter was much better the second time around. On a 1-2 pitch, he drilled a pitch to the left-field corner, clearing the bases and putting American up 10-0.

“I felt with the new pitcher, I felt a lot more confident,” Cody Gordon said. “I got my spot.”

From there, the only question remaining was: could Hillsborough extend the game? It had runners on first and second in the top of the first inning when Bautista and Carson Boyton drew back-to-back, two-out walks, but American starter Ward got out of the jam.

“[Ward] was super amped up the first inning and a half,” Jason Gordon said.

His strikeout to end the inning was the first of five straight batters Ward would retire in order. He got three groundouts on eight pitches in the second and struck out the leadoff batter of the third before his day came to an end.

He was at just 35 pitches, which makes Ward eligible to pitch in Saturday’s winner’s bracket final.

Workman relieved and picked up where Ward left off, striking out the next two batters to end the inning. Ward and Workman combined for seven strikeouts.

“Those two are our ‘early in the game’ guys. Usually one of them is the starter,” Jason Gordon said. “But we’re blessed with a lot of arms. We have all three guys back from last year (when San Mateo American won the District 52 10s title).”

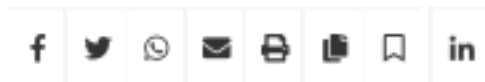
Workman came back out for the top of the fourth to try and close out Hillsborough. He got a strikeout to open the inning, but leadoff hitter Luke Damelio drew a walk before Sean Kott singled sharply to center for Hillsborough’s only hit of the game.

With two on and one out, Workman buckled down, getting a strikeout and a

groundout to second to end the game.

San Mateo American will now take on Alpine/West Menlo in the winners' bracket final 10 a.m. Saturday at Trinta Park. Alpine ran roughshod over San Mateo National in the other semifinal, posting a 16-1 win in a three-inning, mercy-rule finish.

Hillsborough will be back on the field at 5:30 p.m. Friday when it'll take on Belmont/Redwood Shores in a loser's bracket semifinal game. San Mateo National and Pacifica American will play in the other semifinal game, also at 5:30 p.m. Both games are at Trinta Park.



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