

Babe Ruth All-Stars fall in State Finals



Taylor Dahm held Torrance to just four runs on eight hits

By Gregg McMullin

The El Segundo Babe Ruth 13-15 All-Stars played host to one of the California's State tournaments. The five-team tournament included teams from the Imperial Valley, Simi Valley and defending national champion Torrance as well as El Segundo. The winner would advance to the Pacific Southwest Regionals held in Ukiah, California. Ukiah is located nearly 100 miles northwest of San Francisco. The El Segundo All-Stars swept through their first three games of the tournament to get to the finals, but were then swept by Torrance in consecutive mercy rule games to advance to the Northern California tournament.

In the first game of the tournament, El Segundo jumped on Imperial Valley's pitchers for four first inning runs, highlighted by Eric Batty's sacrifice fly to right field. The All-Stars stretched their lead to 9-1 in the third inning and benefited by three hit batters and a walk that all led to runs. In the fourth inning, Raymond Johnson singled and Ian Mc Loughlin doubled. Later in the inning, David Bell had a two-run double to make it 11-1. Batty and Bell limited Imperial Valley to just one run on two hits and El Segundo won the five inning mercy rule game.

El Segundo next faced Simi Valley, which had a bye in the first round. Here again, El Segundo jumped on Simi Valley's pitchers early by hammering out five runs on five hits in the first inning. Bell, McLoughlin, Cas Cousins and Raymond Johnson each had singles in the first inning. In the seventh inning, El Segundo scored four runs, highlighted by Johnson's two-run home run to make it 12-1. Pitching for El Segundo was once again stellar as Braydon Turnbull and Steven Sellens combined to toss a three-hitter.

With the first two wins of the tournament, it set up a showdown with Torrance. The Torrance All-Stars have players from a number of high schools, including St. John Bosco as well as three of Torrance's schools. On the other hand, El Segundo had just two players on the team from another high school. A year ago, El Segundo hosted the Pacific Southwest Regional and was hoping to face Torrance—a team it had beaten twice in a tournament leading up to the regionals. But that showdown never materialized when El Segundo fell into the loser's bracket.

El Segundo trailed 1-0 in the fourth inning when it put together a three-run rally to go out in front 3-1. Torrance countered with a lone run in the fifth inning, but it could have been much worse. Despite loading the bases with one out, the only score of the inning came on a sacrifice fly ball to right field to cut El Segundo's lead to 3-2. In the bottom half of the fifth inning, El Segundo's Bell reached base on an error and later scored an insurance run to make it 4-2.

In the seventh inning, Torrance put runners on first and third with two outs. A sharp groundball that was heading towards centerfield was smothered on a diving stop

by Bell, who flipped to his shortstop and El Segundo came away with the win. Once again, El Segundo's pitching was the highlight with Taylor Dahm going the distance scattering eight hits.

Torrance needed to win its elimination game with Simi Valley to get to the finals against El Segundo and did so with ease. A convincing win over Simi Valley set up a must-win situation in the double elimination format tournament.

Facing an El Segundo team with a pitching staff that had been reliable earlier in the tournament, Torrance needed to make a statement first and did just that with a first inning four-run rally. El Segundo answered with their bats too, scoring six runs on six hits to take the lead. But Torrance's bats stayed alive and the team took the lead for good in the second inning by scoring five more runs on five hits en route to a 19-6 win over El Segundo in a shortened, five-inning, mercy rule game. In the finale, El Segundo's reliable pitching was once again no match for the opposing offense as Torrance came away with a decisive 16-3 victory in the elimination game to advance to the Pacific Southwest Regionals.

Eagle News and Notes

Former Eagle standout Billy Traber should be on the radar for the Boston Red Sox now that the southpaw has been moved to the starting rotation for the Red Sox's Triple-A affiliate Pawtucket. Even if it's a temporary assignment, Bill has been throwing well, including his latest start against Columbus in which he threw 5.1 innings and got the win to improve to 6-5 on the year. Traber, who was coming out of the bullpen, has an eye-popping 2.15 ERA in 28 games with a record of 5-3 when he comes into the game as a reliever.

2005 Eagle Robi Estrada continues to play second base for the Bowling Green Hot Rods (Tampa Bay Rays) of the Single-A South Atlantic League. Estrada has helped the Hot Rods keep pace with the Asheville Tourists (Oakland A's), and the Hot Rods are just a game out of first place with a month to go in the season. •



Little League All-Stars Sweep Sectionals



Photos by Kristi Zeman.

Provided by Dan Ruedas

With a District Championship under their belts, the El Segundo 9- and 10-year-old All Stars went on to defeat West Torrance 14-13 with a come-from-behind win to take Sectionals and advance to the California Sub-Divisional Tournament. El Segundo has now won seven straight games, including a 22-3 victory against Del Rey in its first game and a 12-8 win over West LA in the second game of Sectionals. These two victories set up the dramatic confrontation with West Torrance for the Section 4 Championship.

In the championship game after taking an early 5-2 lead, El Segundo fell behind and trailed 7-11 going into the bottom of the fifth inning. The comeback for El Segundo started in the bottom of the fifth when Jake Palmer hit a two-run home run over the centerfield fence. Then Alec Zeman singled and Jackson Stone got hit by a pitch, bringing up Cameron Judge who hit a two-run double. Kobe Estrada hit a go-ahead, run-scoring single to give El Segundo a lead of 12-11 at the end of five.

However, the lead was short-lived as West Torrance scored two runs in the top of the sixth to forge ahead 13-12. El Segundo was three outs away from its first defeat and being forced into an if-necessary game. But the All Stars showed their depth when nine-year-old rookie Spencer Long led off with a double to bring Noah Ruedas to bat with one out.

Ruedas promptly singled in Long to tie the game. Next up, Zeman doubled deep to right field to drive in Ruedas, who ran for his life all the way from first base to score the game-winning run and complete the comeback for the championship.

El Segundo showed early on in Sectionals that it was the team to beat when it won the first game 22-3 versus District 37 Champion Del Rey. El Segundo pounded out 25 hits in this four-inning game. Jackson Stone led the onslaught with five hits, while Zeman, Judge and Estrada added four hits a piece. Ruedas, Jake Palmer, David Freiburger, Spencer Palmer, Spencer Long, CJ Shevlin, Billy Brasher and Stevie Brandlin each had a hit.

In the second game, El Segundo raced out to a 9-4 lead after three innings and held on to beat West LA 12-8. The balanced offensive attack included two hits each from Judge, Zeman and Stone and one hit each from Jake Palmer, Ruedas, Shevlin, and Long.

El Segundo next plays at Heartwell Park in Long Beach for the Southern California North Sub-Division title where it will try to continue its unbeaten tournament run versus teams from Goleta Valley, Encino, Temple City and Orange. The 9- and 10-year-old All Stars have shown their ability to win in whatever manner they need to, whether it is with their pitching, fielding or hitting. Most importantly, everyone has been able to contribute in a true team effort. Go Gundo! •

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