

All-Stars Fall in Finals



Anthony Lombardo shut down Palmdale to help propel the Manhattan Beach All-Stars into the finals.

By Gregg McMullin

Every good run eventually comes to an end and that sums up what happened to the Manhattan Beach Senior Little League All-Star team. The Manhattan Beach All-Stars, who advanced to the Sub-Division North tournament held in Oxnard, got to the finals after falling into the loser’s bracket. They defeated Oxnard, Orange, Alhambra and Palmdale to reach the elimination game with Palmdale. Their season and great run came to a close when they lost to Palmdale 7-2, in the elimination game, allowing Palmdale to move on to the Division Championship game held in Riverside.

After playing and winning a doubleheader to stay in the hunt for a showdown in the finals of the double-elimination tournament, the Manhattan Beach All-Stars faced Alhambra. Alhambra is the only team to give Manhattan Beach its only loss of the tournament.

When you face a team that you have a measure of revenge for, well, it can be special especially when your game has so much riding on the contest. The winner would move on, while the loser’s season would be finished with the players left wondering what they could have done. The Manhattan Beach All-Stars were still smarting from their game with Alhambra in which they let a four-run lead get away in an 8-7 loss.

The win over Manhattan Beach was also a lesson in sportsmanship, or lack thereof, by the Alhambra All-Stars afterwards. This time, however, it would be different and the Manhattan Beach All-Stars humbled their opponent in their 8-5 win.

Manhattan Beach went with Derek Largent to start the game. Largent, who was the losing pitcher in the first game against Alhambra, wanted the ball. Largent’s uncharacteristic wild pitch had allowed the tying run, and then he surrendered the go-ahead and winning run on a single to centerfield later in the inning.

Largent looked strong through the first three innings, and All-Stars’ manager Steve Manqueros decision to go with him was an obvious one. Besides letting his young pitcher score some revenge, his pitching staff had played eight all-star games in just over a week and was being stretched to the limits.

When Largent started to struggle, Manqueros went with Austin Henning. All Henning did was limit Alhambra’s lineup while Manhattan Beach’s offense, highlighted by Brian Afzali, Anthony Lombardo and Garret Fedor, made any comeback attempt impossible this time out. “It was a special win for us since they (Alhambra) weren’t very gracious in their victory over us the first time around,” said Manqueros.

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