

Hamilton 15s gear up for Mid-Atlantic Regionals in their own house

By Rich Fisher

Fish4Scores.com

Aug. 1: The Hamilton Babe Ruth Babe Ruth 15-year-old All Stars didn't win a state title, but they still have a chance for a regional crown.

The Switlik Gang begins Mid-Atlantic Regional play at 8 p.m. Tuesday at Switlik Park, as the hosts debut against Frederick, Md.

Hamilton had an automatic bid into the regionals, which meant it was only allowed to play in one tournament prior to this week. It sat out the District One Tournament and came in third in the Southern New Jersey state tournament, losing to Ewing in the loser's bracket final at Veterans Park.

"I think that we're going into the regionals feeling like we have a chance to compete," Hamilton's Dan Garcia said. "I feel like we competed in every state game and made them all interesting."

Although it played in "practice" tournaments during districts, the states were the first time Hamilton played for real stakes this summer. Garcia said the team found out a few things about itself.

"We learned that we can come from behind like we did against Northern Burlington, and just stay fired up all game," Garcia said. "In states, all of our pitchers came around, we kept every team to four runs or less and hopefully our bats will come around for regionals."

Hamilton knows little about the competition it will be playing, except what states they are coming from.

"We play two teams from New York, one from Delaware and one from Maryland," Garcia said. "I'm sure they're coming ready to play, just like us."

He added that playing at home should be a plus for Hamilton.

"My brother (Tim) played in the 2006 World Series and the hometown fans came out and showed support," Garcia said. "Hopefully it will be the same for us."

Hamilton plays at 8 p.m. every night in pool play, which is being divided between Veterans Park during the day and Switlik Park at night.

On Wednesday Hamilton meets Western New York champ Evans Youth, on Thursday it plays Delaware champ Bear, and on Friday it takes on Eastern NY champ Niskayuna.

The top three teams in pool play advance to the quarterfinals. The winner of each pool gets a bye in the quarterfinals, which will be at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. at Switlik on Saturday. The semifinals follow at 4 and 7 p.m. and the championship game is Sunday at 6 p.m.

For the complete tournament schedule, log onto:

[Http://home.comcast.net/~blade66/15.pdf](http://home.comcast.net/~blade66/15.pdf).