

**July 26 Babe Ruth SNJ 13s: Nottingham lives on**



*Starting at the upper left and moving clockwise, Nottingham's Konner Blackwell drives a fastball over the centerfield fence for a sixth-inning homer; gets a high five from manager Jim Maher rounding third and gets an even bigger greeting from his teammates after arriving home (Photos by Mike Sabo).*

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**Francioso answers the call again as Nottingham rallies past HEW**

**By Rich Fisher, Fish4Scores.com**

**July 26:** The Nottingham Babe Ruth League is down to one team remaining in the SNJ State

Tournament, and things weren't looking good for that team early in the game tonight.

But the Nottingham 13-year-olds rallied from a 4-0 deficit to take a 10-5 victory over Hightstown-East Windsor in an elimination state game at East Windsor PAL.

"We should just start the game down three or four to nothing," manager Jim Maher said. "We have to stop getting off to these kinds of starts. We need more from our starting pitchers."

Anthony Francioso was again the hero in relief. Francioso entered in the second inning with runners on first and second with none out and Nottingham down by three. An error allowed a fourth run to score but in six innings Francioso allowed two hits and struck out seven.

"By far our best pitcher in the tournament," Maher said. "I didn't throw him an inning in the districts and he has really come through. He's a lefty, so it's hard to pick up the ball on him. He has a good run on his fastball. He's throwing a lot of strikes and hasn't been walking guys and he did a good job tonight.

"But we've got to get more help from the other guys. It's hard to keep coming back all the time."

Tonight's comeback started in the third inning when Mike Suosso and Sean McGeehan walked and Suosso scored on a double play ball.

In the fourth, Konner Blackwell singled, Frank Lucchesi walked, Matt Powers dropped a sacrifice and Suosso slugged a two-run double. Keledy then bunted home Suosso on a squeeze play to tie it.

Nottingham squeaked out the go-ahead run in the fifth when Steven Moticha reached on an error and Mike Nguyen pinch-ran. Nguyen stole second and scored from there on a grounder to shortstop.

Blackwell helped put it away in a five-run sixth as he crushed a two-run homer over the centerfield fence.

"He was on cloud nine," noted scorekeeper Anthony Francioso. "He hit a dead red fastball right over the centerfield fence."

Suosso finished with two hits and two walks while Keledy added two hits.

"Suosso had the big hit to get us back in it," Maher said. "That's the first big hit we've had in a couple games in a big situation. He had a big game offensively, Blackwell swung the bat well and Francioso pitched well.

"Suosso had a great tournament in the preseason tournament swinging the bat. In districts and states he hasn't swung real well until today. Hopefully he's turning it around and this gets him going."

And Nottingham hopes to keep going, for as long as possible.