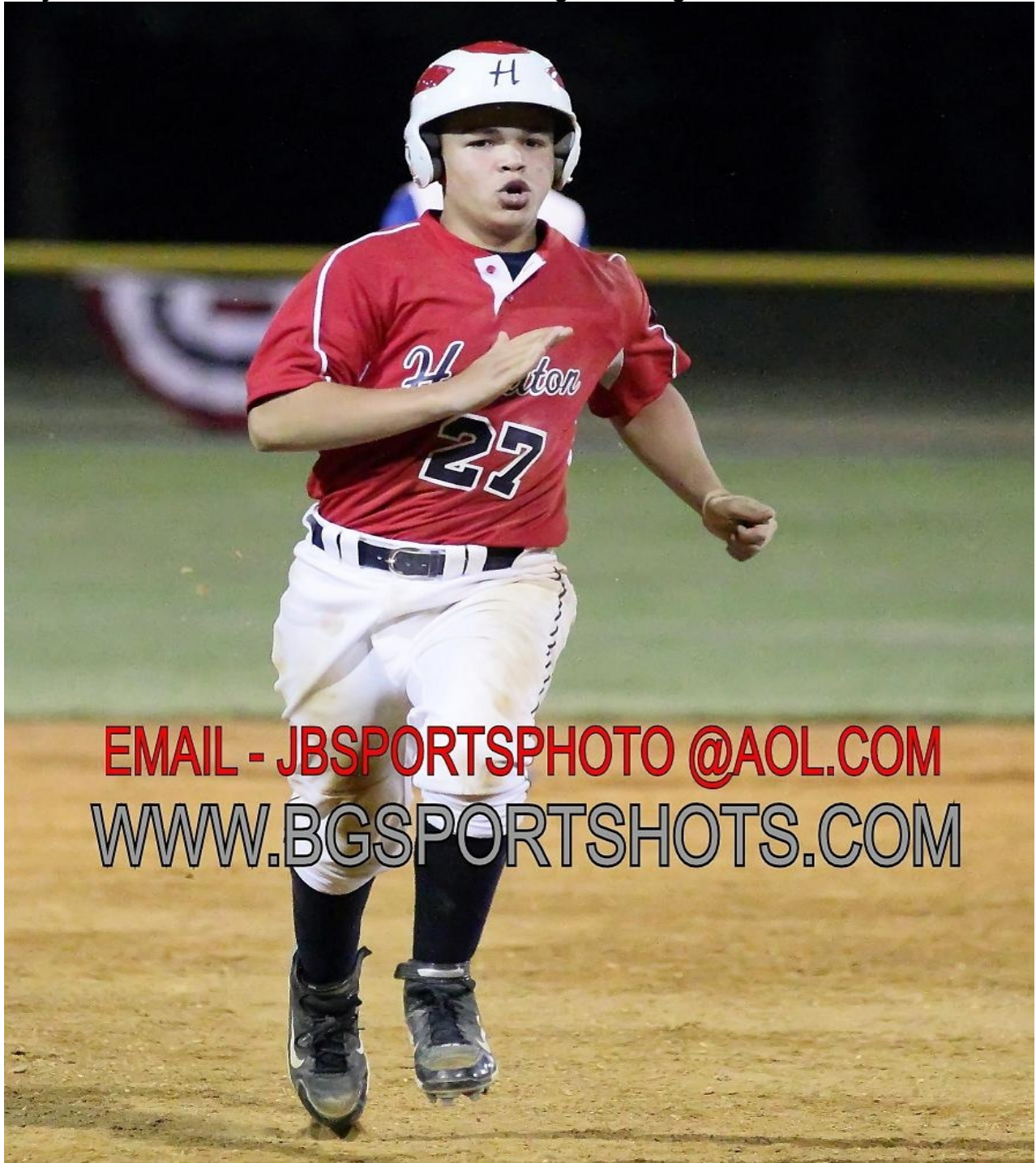


July 27 Babe Ruth SNJ 14s: Hamilton needs to fight back again



Anthony Medina races to third on on Austin Constantini's infield single during tonight's SNJ state game in West Windsor. (Photo by John Blaine/purchase photos by e-mailing jbsportphoto@aol.com).

Northern's two-run rally in the seventh puts Hamilton in familiar position

By Rich Fisher

Fish4Scores.com

July 27: The difference between winning and losing for the Hamilton Babe Ruth 14-year-old All-Stars tonight was a lot bigger than the difference between winning and losing other games.

The main difference is one necessary win vs. three necessary wins.

A victory tonight by the Switlik Gang meant it would get a night off on Thursday and would only have to win once on Friday to lock up an SNJ State Tournament title and berth in the Mid-Atlantic Regional.

A loss meant coming back on Thursday, winning that, and coming back on Friday and having to win two more.

A win tonight meant you might get a championship with just one pitcher.

A loss meant you would need at least three.

The bad news is, Hamilton needs three wins and three pitchers after a heart-breaking, 4-3 walk-off setback to Northern Burlington at Ciuffani Field in West Windsor tonight.

The good news is, Mo's Men have been here before and emerged quite successfully.

In the District One Tournament Hamilton lost its opener then won six straight, including two on the final night.

"It's gonna be tough, but we've done it before," manager Mike "Mo" Mocerri Sr. said. "They're a little down now, but they'll bounce back (Thursday)."

Hamilton meets tournament host West Windsor in the loser's bracket final at 6:30 p.m. Thursday.

We wrote the exact same thing a few weeks ago, as the same two teams met in the districts in the loser's bracket final, with Hamilton winning and both managers being tossed for having words at the plate.

Hamilton must beat WW, then come back and beat Northern twice on Friday.

The night started well for the Switlik Gang, which scored two gift runs in the first and added one in the second. But Northern got one in the third, one in the sixth and scored two in the bottom of the seventh for the walk-off win.

"It was a great baseball game," Mocerri said.

After two were out in the first, Dan Mostrangeli walked and Nick Leona's fly ball to rightfield got lost in the lights, causing a two-base error and allowing Mostrangeli to score. Pitcher Cody Astbury's grounder to shortstop was then thrown away and Hamilton had two gift runs.

In the second, Cole McManimon walked and stole second before Kyle Kafer got two quick outs. But Austin Costantini blooped a single into left to score to score McManimon and make it 3-0.

Astbury danced in and out of trouble through the first six innings and got help from his manager when Mocerri asked for a bat check in the fifth after NB singled to put runners on first and second. The bat was ruled illegal by umpire Rick Garzillo and that took the steam out of a potentially big inning.

But in the seventh, Ryan Shinn doubled, went to second on a ground out and scored on a single by Anthony Meduri, who made up for the first-inning error on the fly ball. A rare Hamilton error then put runners on first and third and, after an intentional walk, Sean Smith lashed a single to right to win it.

"The error hurt a little bit, it was our first one," Mocerri said. "It was tough. We'll have to try to come back one at a time and go from there."

The skipper said there was no thought to removing Astbury in the seventh. As one of the team's two aces, he was given the chance to win or lose his own game.

"I didn't want to take him out," Mocerri said. "He only had 83 pitches. He was right there. You

gotta go with your ace.”

With that, Mocerri summed things up the only way possible.

“Well,” he said, “We’ll see what happens tomorrow.”