

Aug. 5 Babe Ruth Mid-Atlantic Regionals: Hamilton resumes its winning ways



Hamilton's Steve Powell checks the runner at first during the completion of today's suspended game with Evans. Powell was masterful in finishing with a three-hitter. Photo by John Blaine/purchase photos by e-mailing jbsportsphoto@aol.com.

Hamilton win sets up big one with Noskayuna Friday night

By Rich Fisher, Fish4Scores.com

Aug. 4: Tonight's the night for the Hamilton Babe Ruth 15-year-old All Stars.

Well, provided they want to sleep late tomorrow.

After resuming its suspended game from Wednesday and taking a 2-1 win over Evans Youth of Western New York this afternoon at Switlik park, Hamilton takes aim on the opposite end of the Empire State at 8 p.m. tonight.

The Yardville Crew meets Noskayuna of Eastern New York in the final game of Pool A, and both teams are 3-0.

The winner will not have to play until tomorrow at 4 p.m. in the semifinals, while the loser will have to play a quarterfinal game at 1 p.m.

So, if Hamilton wants to preserve pitching, it's imperative to win tonight against a heavy hitting Noskayuna team.

"Our goal is definitely to win tonight and be in the driver's seat," said manager Ralph Mastrangelo, who will pitch Adam Haines.

"You kind of had (tonight's game) in the back of your mind," said centerfielder Gerry Gomez, who went 3-for-3 with a key RBI. "Even if we lost today that game would still decide who won (the pool), so we did think about it a little bit. But we were focused enough on this game."

They sure were, as Hamilton won its second one-run game of the tournament to go along with Thursday's 10-0 blowout victory.

Steve Powell was the story in this one as he finished with a three-hitter, allowing no walks and striking out six.

The game was suspended in the top of the fourth Wednesday night with Evans having a man on second and one out. The count was 3-1 on Tyler Mascio when play resumed, but Powell got him on a ground out and struck out Matt Brozowiec to strand a runner on third.

"At first I actually didn't think about the runner being on second," Powell said. "But when I got out there I started thinking about him."

With the game still scoreless, Hamilton loaded the bases with two outs in the fourth off Brozowiec, who took the mound after Sean Martin pitched the first three innings Wednesday. But Powell's little pop in front of the plate was fielded by the pitcher who stepped on the plate for the force.

Hamilton went back to work in the fifth.

Dan Garcia, who was also 3-for-3, led off with a bunt single. Joe Paragone's sacrifice bunt turned into a double error that put runners on first and third.

Paragone stole second, but Garcia was thrown out at home on John Mastrangelo's grounder to second. Mastrangelo stole second, and Paragone scored on Luke Westerberg's fly ball to center that allowed Mastrangelo to take third. Gomez then grounded a single into right for a necessary insurance run.

After that, it was up to Powell. He allowed a solo homer to Mascio to start the seventh, but it barely fazed him as he got the next three batters easily.

"I just tried not to think about it," Powell said of his day off in the middle of a game. "I like the pressure and I always stay pumped."

"He does a great job out there on the mound," Mastrangelo said. "He's focused, he does well and leaves us in a good position with pitching. In these tournaments you need a lot of pitching."

Hamilton has gotten outstanding pitching from Johnny Mastrangelo, Nick LaBelle, Richard Brown and Powell. Those arms have also been backed by an outstanding defense.

“I trust my defense to make the plays,” Powell said. “I just pound the zone and throw strikes.”

“We’re pretty solid defensively,” Ralph Mastrangelo said. “In the first game we had a few errors out there but that was more jitters. It seems like everyone is relaxed now. And our hitting will come through to what I expect.”

Gomez has been one of the defensive standouts, flagging down pretty much everything in centerfield.

“That’s our biggest thing,” he said. “Mr. (Dave) Lauer has a book with a bunch of things we need to do. One of the biggest is to allow four runs or less in a game and if you do that, you’ll win.

“So far, we’ve allowed less than four runs in every game.”

And they are 3-0.

That’s one helluva book.