

**July 18 Section 3 Tournament – Nottingham wins!**



*Illustration 1: Matt Coiante delivers a first-inning single that helped lead to Nottingham's first run in tonight's 2-0 Section 3 win over Marlboro South (Photo by John Blaine/purchase photos by e-mailing [jbsportsphoto@aol.com](mailto:jbsportsphoto@aol.com)).*

**Morency's clutch pitching gives Nottingham first-round win**

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**July 18:** With the bats on hold, Tony Morency was unleashed.

Morency fired 5-2/3 innings of two-hit ball with no walks, a hit batsmen and eight strikeouts in pitching Nottingham Little League's 12-year-old All-Stars to a 2-0 win over Marlboro South in a Section 3 Tournament opener tonight.

That puts Nottingham into Tuesday night's second round against District 18 champion Holbrook, while Marlboro drops to the loser's bracket against Woodbridge, which fell to North Wall in tonight's opener.

"Tony pitched a great game, I can't say enough about what he did," manager Aaron Oldfield said. "He was the game for us. We won with a bases loaded walk and sacrifice fly and he did the rest."

Morency said he felt no pressure in taking the ball.

"I felt like it was a regular game, I went out like any other game and pitched my heart out," he said. "They swung at a lot of fastballs and I blew it by them or went with my number two pitch (the curve)."

Morency needed one of his best games as Nottingham scored quickly, but not frequently.

The Sayen Gang struck first with a run in the top of the first. Matt Coiante and Matt Ricci hit one-out singles and, after a strikeout, Morency singled and Sam Guarino walked to force in a run.

Nottingham manufactured a second-inning run to make it 2-0 when James Werosta singled and Josh Kent walked, Tom Persichetti sacrificed and Coiante brought home pinch-runner Austin Oldfield on a sacrifice fly. Coiante finished 2-for-3 with an RBI and run scored.

"Well you know Matty," Oldfield said. "He always gets his bat on the ball."

From that point Nottingham's offense turned into a series of missed opportunities. The good news is, Marlboro's bats also failed in the clutch thanks to a gritty effort by Morency.

He got a lift from his defense in one inning, then had to return to favor.

In the fourth inning, Marlboro put runners on first and second with one out and had its most dangerous hitter at the plate. He sent a single into centerfield, where Persichetti made another big defensive play by gunning down the runner trying to score from second. Morency then got a strikeout to finish the inning.

"I was a little bit worried at first when he got the hit," Morency said. "But then I realized Tom was in centerfield and he has a great arm. I knew he would make a good play. It was great, it got us pumped up because it was a tough game. Not what we expected."

The Square Boys expected more runs after scouting Marlboro Friday.

"It was 2-0 and who would have known we would have only been at two runs in the fourth inning?" Oldfield said. "Obviously 2-0 is a lot better than 2-1, but I didn't think it would be that big of a deal because I thought we'd get more runs."

"Justin (Keegan, catcher) did a great job of receiving the ball and blocking the plate. It was a great throw by Tommy and a great play at the plate."

But the tense moments weren't over yet.

In the bottom of the fifth, a single, a misplayed pop up and an error loaded the bases with one out. Morency reared back, got a strikeout and ground out to escape the jam.

"Two errors behind him and he battles and perseveres," Oldfield said. "He came through and did a great job."

When asked how he got out of the jam, Morency said "I had no other choice then to throw strikes. I went with my fastball and it worked."

Morency retired the first two batters in the sixth without incident before reaching his pitch count. Reliever Andrew Moticha walked his first batter but got the last out to end it.

"We thought we'd be OK as far as limiting Marlboro's scoring, but we thought we'd get more runs," Oldfield said. "We left too many guys on base. We got the win. It wasn't pretty but it was a W."

Oldfield said he did not get a chance to scout Holbrook, but will be going with his No. 1 pitcher as Ricci takes the mound tonight.

"Hopefully," Oldfield said, "he goes out throws his usual strong game."