

Aug. 3 NJ Little League Section 3 Tournament: All hail Nottingham 11s!



First they had the celebration (above) and then they showed off what they were celebrating as the Nottingham LL 11-year-old All-Stars beat North Wall for the second straight night to claim the NJ Little League Section 3 championship at 6-11 tonight (Photos by Ken Weingartner).

Nottingham 11s turn tables on North Wall to win Section 3 crown

By Ken Weingartner & Rich Fisher

Aug. 3: After letting a six-run lead go down the tubes in the final two innings against North Wall three games ago, the Nottingham Little League 11-year-old All Stars could have folded up the tent.

Instead, they are unraveling a banner.

A championship banner, that is.

Nottingham won the New Jersey Little League Section 3 Championship at 6-11 tonight by taking a 12-7 victory over North Wall.

The Square Boys advance to the state tournament finals, beginning Tuesday in Edgewater, which is “in the shadows of the George Washington Bridge” according to manager Mark “The Webmaster” Sacco.

“We’re one of the four best teams in the state right now,” Saco said. “We get to go and represent Section 3 in the state finals. I feel confident that our pitching is going to help us and our bats are great. I feel very confident we’ll make a good showing in the state final.”

The Sayen Gang, which kept the title in Hamilton Township after Sunnybrae won it last year, got this one in impressive fashion by defeating the same team twice after North Wall won the winner’s bracket final with six runs in the final inning on July 31.

Nottingham roared by beating the Toms River Americans Monday and North Wall Tuesday and tonight.

“This is great,” said Matt Adams, who went 4-for-4. “They beat us, so it was great to come back and beat them two times. It was kind of a revenge factor. We were just trying to play our best.”

Adams certainly was at his best from the leadoff spot, as North Wall could not get him out.

“It’s great,” Adams said. “Once I get it started then the rest of the team pulls along and we do great. Our pitching staff was really on, so that just helps us a lot. And then our hitting came through. We definitely can carry this through at states.”

“This is great,” added reliever Dom Chiarello. “To win districts was one thing, but to win this is just great. Next we have to go to states and win it all. I think we’ll do very well as long as our pitchers are all on their game and we hit good.”

North Wall made it exciting before Chiarello closed it out.

With Nottingham holding an 8-6 lead, Chiarello entered with the bases loaded and two outs in the bottom of the fourth. He allowed one run to score on a wild pitch, then got a strikeout to end the threat and did not allow a run over the final two frames.

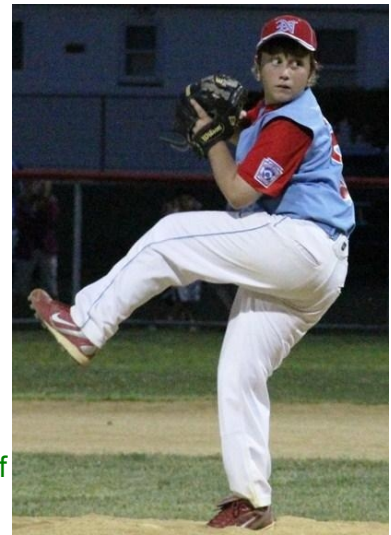
“I just needed to put the ball over the plate and hopefully I could shut them down,” Chiarello said. “I just wanted to throw my game. I found my control and pitched very well after that. I’m usually in relief, so I’m used to it.”

“It was a battle,” Mark Sacco said. “North Wall is a well coached team and they hit really well. We got a couple lucky bounces when we were at the plate and made some key defensive plays and were able to outlast them.

“Joey Sacco pitched awesome to start us, he got us into that fourth inning, and I knew I had Dom Chiarello backing him up. Dom came in and did a great job closing these guys down and keeping them off balance.”

Nottingham took some pressure off the closer by scoring four runs in the top of the sixth to provide some insurance. Alex Coleman delivered a two-run single in the inning while Tristan Spadola added an RBI single. Spadola finished 3-for-3 while Coleman went 2-for-4 with three RBIs.

“They never gave up,” Sacco said of his team. “Even when the North Wall boys battled back



Joey Sacco (above) and Dom Chiarello (below) combined on the mound to hold off North Wall and pitch the Nottingham 11s to the Section 3 title tonight (Photo by Ken Weingartner).

and got within one run, they didn't sit on that one, they battled and manufactured some runs. We got some key hits when we needed them. They never gave up.”

And now they're going up. . . to North Jersey to try and win a state title.