



World Series Journal



AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL

Game 4: Resilient California tops Arkansas, 4-2, Friday



Less than a week after learning that one of their former teammates was randomly murdered, San Mateo (Calif.) Post 82 took to the field for their American Legion World Series opener. And the same resilience the Shockers showed in winning the Western Region right after learning the tragic news was on display Friday.

Post 82 pushed two runs across the plate in the top of the ninth inning to edge Texarkana (Ark.) Post 58 4-2. The Shockers (36-5) trailed 2-1 in the top of the fifth before scoring the game's final three runs. They rallied under the watchful eye of a picture of Calvin Riley, who played for Post 82 last year and was killed Aug. 6 by an unknown assailant while in the Fisherman's Wharf area of San Francisco. The picture was in the San Mateo dugout for the entire game. Riley must have liked what he saw.

"I've never been around a team like this where they know that they're always good enough to win," said San Mateo Assistant Manager Richard Lavezzo, the team's media spokesman. "If they play their game, they're going to be OK. They did it in the championship of the Western Region – we were down 4-2 in the bottom of the eighth.

San Mateo took a 1-0 lead in the top of the second when Ramon Enriquez walked, moved to third on a single and bunt, and then came home on Jordan Brandenburg's groundout. But two innings later Texarkana (37-5) struck back. Blake Hall singled, and catcher Will Smith followed with a shot that just cleared the left-field fence.

Post 82 appeared to rally, loading the bases with no outs in the top of the fourth. But Texarkana starting pitcher Austin Cross struck out the next batter and then coaxed a fly ball to left field that Cole Boyd fielded cleanly and fired home. Smith took the throw and relayed it to second baseman Nick Myers to double up the runner for the third out.

But one inning later Post 82 was back in business. Ricardo Barraza doubled with one out, moved to second on a grounder and then came home on Angelo Bortolin's single, tying the game at 2. Texarkana saw an opportunity slip away in the bottom of the eighth when a baserunner got caught in a rundown between third and home with one out.

San Mateo didn't waste its chance in the top of the ninth. A single, error and hit batter loaded the bases. Tyler Villaroman was then hit, bringing home pinch runner Mitchell DeMartini. Bortolin's deep fly ball to center field brought home Nick Knecht for an insurance run.

Texarkana had another chance in the bottom of the ninth, putting runners on first and second to lead off the inning. But another base-running error took out the lead runner, and San Mateo reliever Felix Aberouette got the final two outs to close out the win.

Spencer Stewart started for Post 82 and pitched well, allowing six hits and two earned runs in seven innings. Austin Cross was also solid for Texarkana, allowing two earned runs and seven hits over eight innings.

San Mateo hasn't lost a game since winning the Reno Knights 4th of July Classic. "(After that), we had a pretty good idea this team could battle from behind," Lavezzo said. "It's easy to play when you're ahead. It's hard to play when you're behind. Since then, we've been on a roll."

Game 5: North Carolina tops Nebraska 5-2



Rowan County (N.C.) Post 342 couldn't have gotten off to a better start Thursday, jumping on top of Indiana 3-0 in the first inning before succumbing to a six-run rally. Post 342 got off to a similar start Friday against Omaha (Neb.) Post 1, jumping on top 3-0 in the top of the second. This time, the lead didn't slip away.

Rowan County (39-13) built the lead to 5-0 and held off a late rally to win 5-2, moving to 1-1 in pool play and slowing what had been a dominating run by Post 1. Omaha (59-4) outscored its Central Plains Region opponents 46-4 and won its Thursday opener 14-5 over Washington.

Rowan County (39-13) paired up four hits with three walks to take a 3-0 lead in the top of the second. Two hits and a walk loaded the bases for Trevor Atwood, who drew a free pass to bring home Juan Garcia. Tanner File followed with an RBI single

to score Brandon Walton, and Chandler Blackwelder's deep fly ball scored Jake Pritchard.

After both teams went scoreless for the next three innings, Post 342 strung together two hits and a fielder's choice to put runners on first and second. A wild pitch moved both runners up, and Walton followed with a looping single into right field that brought Lee Poteat and Garcia home, upping the advantage to 5-0.

The combination of Bryan Ketchie and Hunter Shepherd shut down a late Nebraska rally to move both teams to 1-1 in pool play heading into the weekend.

Game 6: Indiana holds off Washington 5-3

Making the most of its hits, Rockport, Ind., Post 254 put itself into a strong position heading into the final weekend of The American Legion World Series.

Rockport got just three hits, but those produced four runs and led the team to a 5-3 win against Kennewick, Wash., Post 34. Rockport didn't get a hit until the bottom of the fifth inning and was out-hit 9-3, but drew five walks and was hit by two pitches. Post 254 (34-1) moved to 2-0 in pool play, while Kennewick fell to 54-16 overall and 0-2 in pool play.

A pair of walks and a wild pitch set up Post 254's first run. In the bottom of the second, Jakob Shuler and Sammy Rowan reached base on four consecutive pitches and moved up a base on a wild pitch. Hunter Rowe then grounded out to second, bringing home Shuler.

Three innings later, Rowe and Caleb Helms walked to start the inning; after a strikeout, Kobe Stephens also walked to load the bases.



With his team hitless until that point, Trever Zink then softly lined the ball down the left-field line for a double, bringing home Rowe and Helms. Shuler follow with a single up the middle that brought home Stephens and Zink, upping the Indiana lead to 5-0.

Post 254 pitcher Jesse Stallings (3-0) held Kennewick scoreless until the bottom of the ninth, when he gave up two singles and a walk to load the bases and was relieved by Corey Ebelhar.

A wild pitch led to one run, and Blake Loftus followed with a two-run single that closed the gap to 5-3. But Ebelhar was able to coax a grounder from the next batter to produce a double play, and two batters later got a fly ball to center field to end the game.

SCORES

Texarkana, AR -	2
San Mateo, CA -	4
Rowan County, NC -	5
Omaha, NE -	2
Kennewick, WA-	5
Rockport, IN -	3

STANDINGS

STARS

Cumberland, RI	1-0
San Mateo, CA	1-0
Texarkana, AR	0-1
Leesburg, VA	0-1

STRIPES

Rockport, IN	2-0
Omaha, NE	1-1
Rowan Co., NC	1-1
Kennewick, WA	0-2

SCHEDULE

Game 7: 12:30 p.m. (ESPN3)
Leesburg, VA (0-1)
San Mateo, CA (1-0)

Game 8: 4:00 p.m. (ESPN3)
Cumberland, RI (1-0)
Texarkana, AR (0-1)

Game 9: 7:30 p.m. (ESPN3)
Rockport, IN (2-0)
Omaha (1-1)

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