

# Pelham Bay Captures Astor Championship

BY WILLIAM FESKO

The Pelham Bay Junior/Senior Division All-Stars ended their magical season with yet another championship title.

After an unlikely march to its first ever district championship, the boys of blue and gold stormed through the sectionals to reach the NYC Finals, capping off the season with the All-Stars winning the Astor Invitational Championship.

In the A.I.T. semifinals vs. Pelham Parkway, Pelham Bay, ranked #5 in the state, cruised to an 11-1 victory, on the back of Mike Ambrosino's 11K, 1-hit performance, and Sal Annunziata's 1st inning 3-run homerun.

Jimmy Rodopoulos, who batted .760 in the Districts, continued his incredible performance, hitting 3-for-3. "I was in a zone," he said. "I had total confidence in my hands."

In Game 1 of the championship, Annunziata took the mound, allowing Fordham/Bedford only 3 runs in 4 tough innings.

Down 3-1 in the 4<sup>th</sup> inning, switch-hitting slugger Rob Robles, batting from the left side, belted a 325-foot blast, followed by an opposite field home run from Rodopoulos to tie the score.

Pelham Bay exploded for 6 more runs in the bottom of the 5<sup>th</sup>, with Annunziata again connecting on a 3-run homer.

An inning later, Robles became the first switch-hitter in Pelham Bay history to homer from both sides of the plate

during the same game when he smacked a 3-run walk-off bomb from the right side, as the crowd roared in amazement. Pelham Bay won by the score of 13-3.

Pelham Bay would win the following day in a similar manner, beating Fordham/Bedford 14-2 to claim the Astor Invitational.

Among the stars of the game was Carl Triano, who tied the little league record of playing all 9 positions during the district tournament. Triano ended his Junior/Senior division career with a 3-run homerun, setting the Pelham Bay record for most hits (regular season and all-stars) with 112.

"Playing all 9 positions was fun but the most important thing is that it helped us win the district," Triano said.

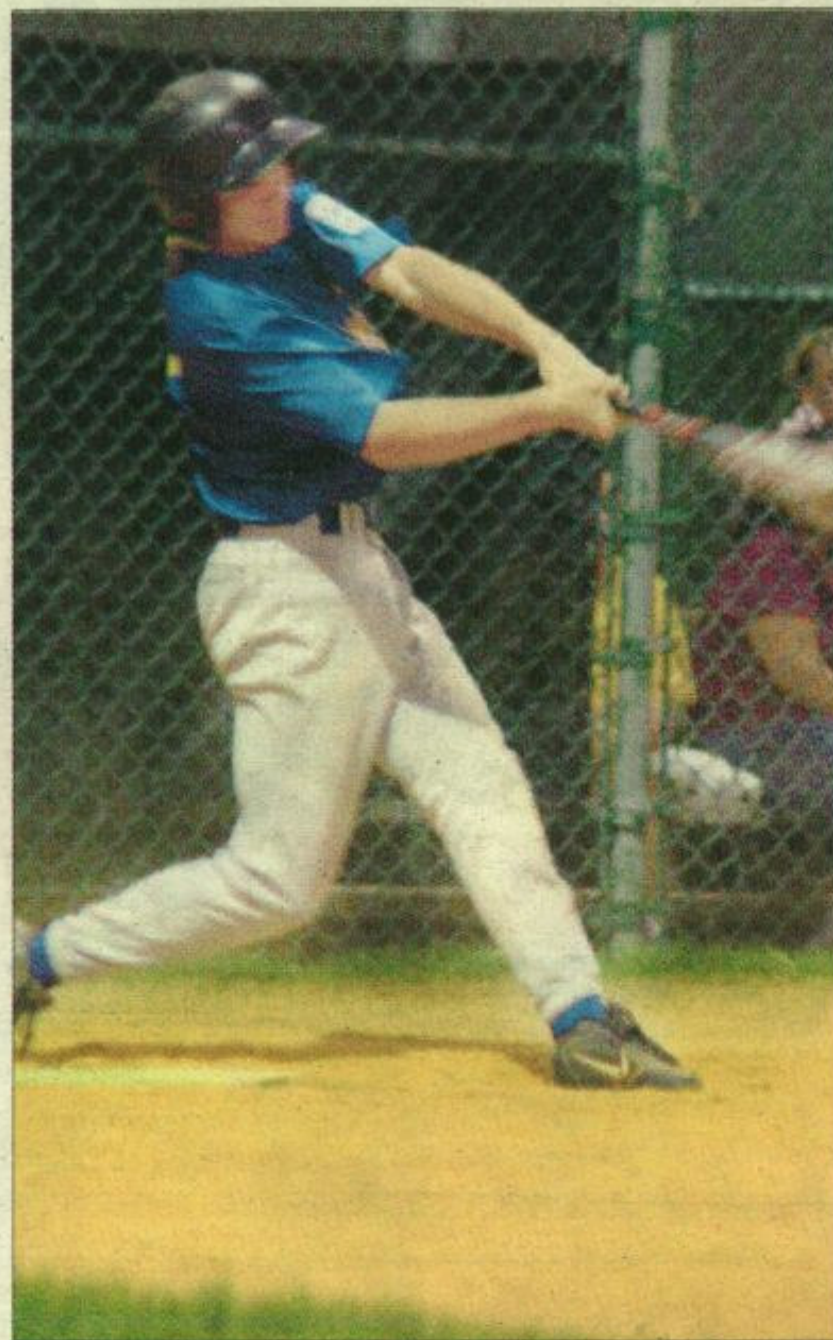
Ambrosino increased his record to 13-0 for the season and picked up the MVP.

"He gets stronger as the game goes on," said manager Joe Giardino. "Ambro is one-of-a-kind. You could basically pencil him in for a W with 10+ strikeouts every game. Automatically."

Ambrosino would not accept full credit for the team's championship victory. "Jeremiah Perez is the MVP because he is the glue that keeps our team together in the dugout and on the field," he said.

The compliment summed up the team's chemistry with the players acting as each others' biggest fans.

Said coach Carl Triano: "This wasn't just a team, it was more like a family."



- PHOTO BY WALTER POFELDT

Explosive hitting (above) from the Pelham Bay All-Stars routed teams, including two straight wins over Fordham/Bedford in the finals of the Astor Invitational Tournament.