

Pel Bay wins 1st District 22 division title

JUNIOR/SENIORS ALL STARS END 42 YEARS OF HARD LUCK



The 2007 Pelham Bay Junior/Senior District 22 Champions.

by William Fesko

The Pelham Bay Junior/Senior Division All-Stars captured its first District Championship, ending a losing streak that spanned across 42 years of hard luck and heartbreak.

During the playoff rounds of the double elimination tournament, Pelham Bay averaged 19 runs scored per game while allowing only 5, advancing to the championship round without a loss.

Sluggers Joey Saverino (5-6, 5 Runs, 5 RBI, 2 BB), Carl Triano (7-10, 6 Runs, 5 RBI), Jimmy Rodopoulos (5-8, 5 Runs, 4 RBI, 3 BB) and Sal Annunziata (6-10, 4 Runs, 4 RBI) sparked the attack.

Rob Robles (3-6, 4 Runs, 3 RBI, 2 BB) and Rob Ambrosino (3-8, 4 Runs, 3 RBI) balanced out the offensive onslaught with Mike Donahue, Nick English, Joey Giardino, Jeremiah Perez and Jimmy Solero leading the defensive effort, recording not one error.

Rounding out the effort, Mike Ambrosino, the ace of Pelham Bay's staff, mesmerized his opponents, working 6 lockdown innings, striking out 10 and posting a 1.00 W.H.I.P. Sal Annunziata, Steve Spinelli and Rob Ambrosino provided quality innings to move Pelham Bay to the championship round.

In the championship round, Pelham Bay was pitted against perennial powerhouse, Castle Hill.

Pelham Bay jumped out to a 4 run lead in the top half of the 1st, highlighted by a 3-run double from Saverino. Solero, Rodopoulos and Triano started off the top of the 2nd with 3 consecutive singles to ignite another rally and push

the lead to 7-1.

Castle Hill, famous for their ability to rally with 2 outs, brought the score to 7-4 with a 2-run, 2-out single by Gio Cruz in the bottom of the 2nd.

Both teams traded runs to make it 8-5, but in the bottom of the 4th, Castle Hill exploded for 6 runs to take an 11-8 lead.

In the top of the 5th inning, Rodopoulos came through with a 2-run double to put Pelham Bay within one. Triano knotted the score at 11, with a lazer beam to left-center field.

Castle Hill came right back, as Cruz led off the bottom of the 5th with a double and scored on a single by Josh Donato.

In the top of the 6th, Ambrosino and Saverino reached base on walks with 2 outs bringing Giardino to the plate. Giardino came through with a single to left to tie the game.

The score remained deadlocked going into the bottom of the 7th. With 1 out, Josh Donato came through in the clutch and drove in the winning run to the delight of Castle Hill's frenzied fans. Since Pelham Bay didn't have a loss in the tournament, Castle Hill had to beat them 1 more time to eliminate them.

Before the start of the second do-or-die championship game, Ambrosino cryptically told his teammates, "The only way to beat this team is to put up 10 more runs than them and end the game early. Otherwise, they will come back!"

So with their backs up against the

wall, Pelham Bay turned to 13-year old pitching sensation, Ambrosino.

Ambrosino, representing every Pelham Bay pitcher from 1965 to the present, stepped up to the mound with his usual calm demeanor. Mixing up his plus fastball and changeup to keep Castle Hill off balance, Ambrosino provided 5 quality innings, striking out 8 and allowing only 2 earned runs.

With the score at 14-4 in the top of the 5th and Castle Hill down to their last out, Ambrosino snagged a hard-hit one-hopper right at him and ran to 1st by himself to record the final out of the game.

"I didn't want to take any chances so I raced their player to the bag", Ambrosino said of Pelham Bay's historic championship win.

After the game, coach Charley McDonald spoke about Pelham Bay's monumental victory, "Our players, through determination and perseverance, accomplished an incredible amount in such a small time together."

Now, the Pelham Bay All-Stars advance to the sectional rounds, breaking new ground every step of the way.

"Winning a district is a Bronx kid's equivalent to winning the World Series. These are great memories that will always stay with these guys," manager Joe Giardino said. "Nobody could ever take this away from our players. It's theirs forever. This District Championship is dedicated to Phyllis English, may she rest in peace, and my mama Maryanne Giardino."