

START YOUR ENGINES FOR WILLIAM HARLEY DAVIDSON TOURNAMENT

By Bob Behre

The Williams Harley Davidson Tournament is revving up this weekend at Diamond Nation and what has developed into an outstanding annual event promises to deliver in a big way.

Six age-level championships will be crowned at the Flemington facility as 68 teams square off for the hardware. The 11U, 12U, 13U and 14U fields all open play on Friday evening while the 9U and 10U brackets don't get underway until Saturday morning.

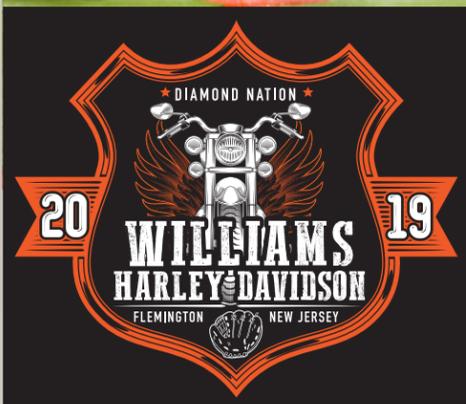
Power 5 plays Wladyka National and Heavy Hitters 4 takes on the Diamond Jacks Gold 14U in the **14U Williams Harley Davidson Tournament** opens at 6:30 p.m. on Friday. The 14U tournament playoffs begins on Sunday when the No. 2 seed faces the No. 3 seed in the first round at 4:30 p.m. The winner meets the No. 1 seed in the championship game at 6:30 p.m. on Field 5.

Look for such talented programs as the Teel Ravens, Bronx Bombers, Diamond Jacks Super 14U and Prospect Baseball Academy in the deep 14U tournament field.

The **13U Williams Harley Davidson Tournament** opens at 6:30 p.m. on Friday pit LVBA Prospects against the Diamond Jacks Gold 13U and the Morris County Cubs against the CB Raiders. The 13U tournament playoffs begins at 4:30 p.m. Sunday with the top four seeds squaring off in the semifinals. The winners meet for the 13U tournament championship at 6:30 p.m. on Field 1.

Jersey Boyz Baseball, Full Count Baseball, South Jersey Elite, Wladyka Baseball, New Jersey Nationals, the Diamond Jacks Super 13U and Full Count Baseball add to an already prodigious field in the 13U tournament.

The Cinnaminson Pirates face the Diamond Jacks Super 12U and the Morris County Cubs play the Diamond Jacks Gold 12U in a pair of intriguing openers in the **12U Williams Harley Davidson Tournament**. The 12U tournament playoffs kicks off at 12:15 p.m. on Sunday when the Nos. 4 and 5 seeds play and the Nos. 2 and 3 seeds square off.



on Field 2.

The NJ Renegades, All-Out Baseball, the Morris County Cubs and the New Milford Hitmen are some of the perennial strongholds in the 11U tournament.

Both the **9U and 10U Williams Harley Davidson Tournament** open play at 8 a.m. on Saturday. Legit Baseball plays the RVC Tigers in the 9U tournament opener. Warrior Baseball NY takes on the Diamond Jacks 10U squad in the 10U tournament opener.

The 9U tournament playoffs begins with the semifinals at 4:30 p.m. on Sunday on Fields 4A and 4B. The 9U championship game is set for 6:30 p.m. on Field 4B. The 10U tournament playoffs begins at 2:15 p.m. on Sunday when the Nos. 4 and 5 seeds play and the Nos. 2 and 3 seeds tangle. The 4 vs. 5 winner advances to play the No. 1 seed at 4:30 p.m. before that winner plays the winner of the 2 vs. 3 game for the championship at 6:30 p.m. on Field 6.

Warriors Baseball NY and the Devil Cats 9U round out the 9U tournament field. Cadets Baseball, RE Red and the Weston Warriors round out the 10U tournament field.

MALDONADO BROTHERS GUIDE SETON HALL PREP TO VICTORY OVER NO. 8 NUTLEY

By Bob Behre

Unranked Seton Hall Prep turned a pitchers duel into a stunning rout on the way to a 13-2 victory over Nutley, ranked No. 8 in the NJ.com Top 20, on Monday in Nutley.

Nutley's friendly left field confines proved quite inviting for Seton Hall, which hit four home runs and struck for six runs in the fourth and sixth innings.

Seton Hall edged Nutley, 3-2 in 10 innings, in the teams' first meeting this season on April 8. The two Essex County powers could meet again in the Greater Newark Tournament, which begins this week. Nutley is the top seed in the 87th GNT and Seton Hall is seeded No. 2.

Seton Hall's 13-hit attack certainly made life comfortable for senior Nick Maldonado, who was limited to a strict pitch count due to a pre-season hamstring tweak, and Nick's freshman brother, Chris. The two righthanders pulled off the combined Maldonado family victory for the first time in their careers.

"That was the plan, to split it, and yes, that was pretty cool," said the Vanderbilt-bound Nick Maldonado, who limited Nutley (13-2) to three hits and one unearned run over four innings. He struck out five and walked none in a 57-pitch effort.

"We were keeping Nick to a 60-pitch maximum," said Seton Hall Prep head coach Mike Sheppard, Jr. "That was nice to see them both out there. Chris is a talented kid and can be tough with that curveball and changeup. It also helped that we gave him a 7-1 lead to start."

Big brother Nick did the heavy lifting early in what was a 1-1 pitchers duel through three innings. Nutley's ace Josh O'Neill's fastball and curveball were extremely effective early. O'Neill's only blemish to that point was Jack Eichler's long home run in the top of the first inning that landed on Franklin Street, well beyond the left-center field fence.

Nick Maldonado surrendered a run in the bottom of the first when he hit Marty Higgins with a pitch and the Nutley shortstop stole second, reached third on a fielder's choice and scored on a two-out infield error.

"I was trying to find the zone early on," said Maldonado, who went to three separate three-ball counts in the first inning. But he found his curveball and fastball quickly enough. "My curveball was definitely my best pitch today and my two-seam was pretty good, too." He would, in fact, throw just nine balls out of the strike zone to the 12 batters he faced after the first inning.

Higgins and Trevor Santos singled with two outs in the third and Justin Lucia singled with two outs in the fourth, but Nick got through both innings clean.

Seton Hall would turn the game significantly in its favor in the top of the fourth, sending 11 batters to the plate before six runs crossed the plate.

One-out singles by Andrew Tuozzolo and Tommy O'Rourke started it before O'Neill hit Justin Cassella with a pitch to load the bases. Karson Harcourt, the No. 7 hitter, stepped in and delivered a two-run double to left-center. Tyler Kaufman was intentionally walked to set up the double play possibility but No. 9 hitter Justin Zyska would not comply. He singled to left to score Cassella with the third run of the inning.

Joe DeCicco, Seton Hall's leadoff batter, had a monster game and joined the hit parade in the fourth. He bounced a shot over the fence in left-center for a grounds rule double and two more runs. Chris Maldonado followed by hitting a bouncer to third, but Zyska beat the throw home for a 7-1 lead.



Brothers and Diamond Jacks Chris Maldonado, left, and Nick Maldonado of Seton Hall Prep combined to 5-hit Nutley on Monday.

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MALDONADO (continued from front page)

Nutley scored an unearned run in the fifth, keyed by Higgins' grounds rule double to center field, but Seton Hall would put on its own personal home run derby against the Nutley bullpen in the sixth to put the game away.

Zyska kicked off the sixth inning in style for the Pirates, blasting a home run over the fence in left-center. DeCicco (3-for-4, run, three RBI) followed with a bomb onto Franklin Street for a 9-2 lead. Chris Maldonado was hit by a pitch and Tuozzolo singled before Harcourt, the previously nondescript No. 7 hitter, stepped in.

"I really haven't been hitting that well," said the sophomore Harcourt. "I got a 3-1 pitch and I knew I was getting a fastball. I expected it and squared it up."

Harcourt (2-for-4, 2 runs, 5 RBI) unloaded a three-run bomb that carried the left-center field stands and bounced onto Franklin Street. It was Harcourt's first varsity home run and the blast gave Seton Hall a 13-2 lead. It also gave Chris Maldonado the opportunity to close



Marty Higgins of Nutley stokes a single into right field during his team's loss to Seton Hall Prep on Monday.

out a mercy rule victory in the bottom of the sixth.

The younger Maldonado retired Nutley in order to close out his two innings of work. He permitted one unearned run on two hits, struck out four and walked none.

It was the first time anyone could remember Seton Hall Prep hitting four home runs at the Nutley Oval, a venue usually reserved over the years for such fireworks by the home team.

"We have a tendency to take too many pitches and be a bit tentative," said Sheppard, Jr. of his hitters. "Later in the game we were looking for fastballs and to hit early in the count."

After a busy week of Super Essex Conference games, both teams have first round GNT games on Saturday. Top-seeded Nutley faces the winner of Thursday's prelim pitting 17th-seeded Glen Ridge at 16th-seeded Newark Academy. Seton Hall plays host to 18th-seeded Newark Tech at 2:30 p.m.

BOMBERS ELITE CAPTURE 14U JENNIE FINCH INVITATIONAL TITLE



By Bob Behre

Strong pitching, solid defense and a relentlessly aggressive offensive attack proved the perfect formula as the Bombers Elite defeated Infinity Shock, 9-3, in the 14U Jennie Finch Invitational championship game Sunday night at Diamond Nation in Flemington.

Anna Dziecinny and Sarah Trosin combined on a four-hitter, striking out five and walking two while the Bombers Elite defense played an errorless game when it counted most.

Bombers Elite also competed in the 2017 Jennie Finch Invitational, finishing second. Bombers Elite coach Carlos Rodas indicated his players used that as motivation to take that next step this time.

"We rode Anna and Sarah all weekend and they were great," said Rodas. "And Gianna King stepped in and ate up some big innings for us early in the day on Sunday."

At the plate, the Rhode Island-based Bombers Elite presented an attack that put the ball in play to the tune of 13 hits and consistently forced Infinity Shock to make difficult plays.

"I think our small ball and the way we run the bases effected them," said Rodas. "They are an excellent team, so I believe if we were not fortunate enough to succeed at that approach, it's a different game."

Bombers Elite (7-1) seemed to find success at every turn and underestimating it's rock solid defense, particularly in the infield, would be a mistake. When a 14U team makes all the plays and gets effective pitching, they are extremely difficult to defeat.

The Rhode Island squad scored six runs in the first two innings and five of them were delivered with two outs.

It was Dziecinny, the Bombers No. 3 hitter, who triggered the rally in the top of the first inning when she reached on an infield error with two outs. Dziecinny then raced all the way to third on Amanda McDonnell's infield single. Trosin followed with a hard single through the left side to score Dziecinny.

Bombers Elite would strike for five runs in the second inning on six hits, two Infinity Shock errors and two stolen bases.

Maddie Wrench started it with a one-out double over third base and promptly scored on Rachael Sayler's single to right field. Sayler stole second and scored on Amelia Murphy's single for a 3-0 lead. Three more runs would come home in the inning as Nevaeh Caro reached on a bunt single and Dziecinny and McDonnell ripped singles through the left side.

Meanwhile, Dziecinny was stifling Infinity Shock (6-2) in the circle, shutting out the Albany, N.Y.-based team on one hit over the first three innings. Before Rodas put

the remainder of the game in the hands of Trosin, the Bombers gave her three more runs to work with.

Jenna Altieri, Bombers Elite's No. 10 hitter, got the rally going in the fourth with a hard one-out single to left field. Altieri then stole second and scored on Murphy's double to left field. Caro singled home Murphy for an 8-0 lead and scored later in the inning on a throwing error.

Infinity Shock, which scored 61 runs in its eight tournament games, finally got its bats going in the bottom of the fifth when it struck for three runs on three hits.

Abby Hacker started the rally for Infinity Shock when she hit a bouncer deep in the shortstop hole and beat it out for a leadoff infield hit. It was only the second hit of the game for Infinity Shock and both were by Hacker.

Miranda King then drew a walk. Kylie McLaughlin followed with a one-out laser into right-center field that went for a two-run triple. Maddie Bland kept the rally firing with an RBI single to center field, trimming the deficit to 9-3.

But Trosin got the next two batters to bounce out to the left side as shortstop Murphy and third baseman Altieri handle their chances smoothly to put the game away.

"We have a big team, 15 girls," said Rodas. "All 15 have been hitting. You can play 15 girls if you have defined roles and we have that. The girls have bought in and are playing great."

It was the second championship in as many tournaments this spring for Bombers Elite, which outscored its tournament opponents this weekend 60-35. Infinity Shock held a 61-48 runs advantage on its opponents.

TOURNAMENT RECAPS

10U NJ Mystics 5, Banshees Red 4



The NJ Mystics edged Banshees Red, 5-4, in the 10U Jennie Finch Invitational championship game. Ava Sweet of the Mystics was named the 10U tournament's Most Valuable Player. The Mystics (6-0) outscored their opponents 56-8 while Banshees Red (4-2-1) held a 38-18 runs advantage on its opponents.

12U Blue Jersey Girls '06 14, Vineland Pride 0



Jersey Girls '06 rolled to a 14-0 victory over Vineland Pride in the 12U Blue Jennie Finch Invitational championship game. Jersey Girls (7-0) outscored their tournament opponents 69-19. Vineland Pride (5-3) was outscored by its opponents 42-18.

12U Red PA Venom Black 6, OC Bombers Black 3



PA Venom Black defeated OC Bombers Black, 6-3, in the 12U Red Jennie Finch Invitational championship game. PA Venom Black (7-0) outscored its opponents 64-21. OC Bombers Black (4-2-1) held a 56-39 runs advantage over its opponents.