

■ A LOOK BACK AT THE 2003 WILLIAMSPORT TOURNAMENT ■

WILLIAMSPORT REVISITED

JANUARY FEBRUARY MARCH APRIL MAY JUNE JULY AUGUST SEPTEMBER OCTOBER NOVEMBER DECEMBER

It's been five years since a group of 12-year-old Saugus American Little League all-stars galvanized a struggling community, while captivating the North Shore, state, region and finally the nation at the Little League World Series in Williamsport, Pa. Throughout the next eight weeks, the Saugus Advertiser will relive that glorious summer of 2003 that no Saugonian will ever forget. The first installment is sponsored by Wheelabrator Saugus.

**District 16 Game 2
Saugus Americans 24 - Saugus Nationals 2**

NO MERCY

By Nicholas Wiselogel
Sports Correspondent

With victories in their respective opening games, the Saugus American Little League and National Little League All-Star teams earned the right to play each other Monday in a intricacy showdown. However, this one was essentially over in the first inning. The Americans jumped out to a 7-0 lead before the Nationals came to the plate, and ended up winning the game, 24-2.

"Putting up seven runs before the other team comes to bat takes the spark out of any team," American Little League coach Rob Rochenski said. "I don't care if it's the Red Sox in Major League Baseball, going down early like that hurts any team."

National Little League coach Tony Silva agreed, attributing his team's slow start on a number of fielding mistakes. "We really didn't play well in the field, and I think that's why they were able to get seven runs in the first inning," he said. "It was just one of those games that doesn't make anybody feel good."

Matt Muldoon pitched for the Americans, which was the AL's first game, was stopped after four, because of the 10-run rule. He also hammered two home runs to now give him three in two games.

Yano Petruzzelli and Dario Pizano smacked one homerun apiece to secure the victory.

Rochenski said that he was also pleased with the play of Anthony Disciscio, who took over the first base chores from Muldoon. "He came in, and we didn't

miss a beat," Rochenski said. "I think it is the same for us at every point, which is very nice."

Dave Ferreira picked up four hits, and Tyler Calla had another strong performance behind the plate for the Americans.

"They have a great team, no question about it," Silva said. "It was exciting playing the other team from Saugus, but we knew we were playing a very good team. They are well-coached, they hit well, they field well and they are disciplined. We knew that if we had any shot at winning, we had to play mistake-free baseball, and we just didn't do that."

The Americans are now 2-0. Rochenski said that coming into the tournament expectations were very high. "Every kid in the lineup has popped one out of the park at one time or another, which is pretty incredible," Rochenski said. "We're off to a good start, now we just have to keep it going."

Soon after the disastrous first inning, Silva said that he began preparing his team for his next game. "Once the score got out of hand, we decided we needed to keep our pitchers available for the next game," he said.

After Greg Bluestein finished two innings, and with the Nationals trailing 16-2, Silva put in Nick Beltraming for one, and Alan Williamson for the fourth and final inning. "They have a great team, no question," Silva said. "Like I said, we knew we had to play mistake-free baseball to beat them. It was just one of those days where you just want to go back to bed. It was the wrong day for us against the wrong team, period."

**District 16 Game 1
Saugus Americans 17 - West Lynn Nationals 0**

Americans cruise past West Lynn Nationals

OPENING DAY LAUGHTER

By Nicholas Wiselogel
Sports Correspondent

For the past four years, those associated with the Saugus American Little League have known that this year's 12-year-old crop of players was something special. Over that time, under the tutelage of Bucky Cole and Mark Sacco, the same group of players has played in numerous tournaments and games outside of its regular season schedule.

In its opening game of the District 16 Williamsport Little League tournament, the Americans didn't disappoint. The locals knocked off the West Lynn National Little League All-Stars in a mercy rule shortened game, 17-0.

"This group has been playing together for a long time, and people have been talking about them since they were about eight-years-old," said coach Rob Rochenski. "People have been saying that, when these kids are 12, they will have a legitimate shot to win some games. Of course, I don't want to fill their heads with too many ideas, and so we are just trying to take it one game at a time, one inning at a time, but we have a very good team."

The Americans wasted no time showing why they will be a force to be reckoned with, putting up seven runs in the top of the first. The offensive outburst was sparked by leadoff hitter Craig Cole, who also pitched all four shutout innings for the locals.



FILE PHOTOS BY DAVID SOKOL
The 2003 Saugus American Little League 11-12 year-old Williamsport Tournament All-Star team was together from the beginning one year ago, and that camaraderie carried them straight to Williamsport, Pa. to participate in the World Series.

First baseman Matt Muldoon belted a three-run homerun, and shortstop Mike Scuzzarella and second baseman Joe Kasabuski also had impressive performances at the plate, as well as in the field for the Americans.

Although Rochenski is the head coach for the Williamsport tournament, he is quick to credit Cole and Sacco with developing the players over the past couple of years. "They have been coaching these kids for four or five years," he said. "They deserve a lot of the credit,

and I think we're just reaping the rewards of their hard work. I've known all of the kids for a few years, coaching and umpiring in the league, and so it was pretty easy to take over coaching this team this year.

"But all the tournaments and all the teams they've played on besides the league teams have really made them good. When they were 10-years-old, they were beating some teams that had mostly 12-year-olds. They just have a good baseball mentality."

**District 16 Game 4
Saugus Americans 7 - Swampscott 1**

Americans pounce on Swampscott to remain undefeated

STARTING QUICKLY

By Nicholas Wiselogel
Sports Correspondent

After getting past Pine Hill, the Americans knew they were in for a serious test against Swampscott, the most dominant team in the district over the past decade Tuesday night at Wyoma in Lynn in the winners bracket final.

"Like most Little League teams, Swampscott is a good fastball hitting squad," Rochenski said. "And we have a couple of fireballers, I could have sent out there, but I decided to go with Scuzzarella, who has a very good breaking ball. They were expecting heat, but instead they got junk." Scuzzarella kept them guessing struck out 12 in six innings.

Before Scuzzarella even pitched, though, the Americans had already done some damage. Batting in the top of the first, Joe Kasabuski battled back from an 0-2 count to draw a two-out walk. The next batter, Dave Ferreira, then proceeded to blast a two-run homerun to give the locals the lead, which they kept throughout the entire game.

Later in the game, Tyler Calla, batting in the eighth spot, belted a three-run homer to extend the lead, and Saugus went on to win, 7-1.

"Up until that last strikeout which ended the game, we didn't count them out," Rochenski said. "They really are the team

to beat, they've owned the district for the last 10 to 12 years."

And even after the win, Rochenski knows that Swampscott can not be counted out. Last year, the Americans knocked off the district powerhouse early in the tournament. Swampscott then came back battling through the losers bracket, and won the second meeting between the two teams, as well as the title.

It's something that the Americans will certainly be trying to avoid on either Sunday or Monday of next week, when the district finals get underway.

One thing was for certain, the Americans did not enter the Swampscott game feeling overconfident.

"All of them from we were playing a good team (Swampscott)," Rochenski said. "It was up to the coaches to tell them that these are regular kids, who brush their teeth and swim everyday just like them."

After a convincing win over Swampscott, Rochenski said that the key would be for his team to remain humble, and Rochenski for one hopes to keep guiding them past the district level of the tournament.

"We are really hoping we can get out of the district and go into uncharted territory for us," he said. "It's some place I've never been before. I'll be happy to keep pushing back my summer plans, and I'm sure everyone else will be too."

**District 16 Game 3
Saugus Americans 12 - Pine Hill 2**

Americans turn it on late to beat Pine Hill

ANOTHER ROUT

By Nicholas Wiselogel
Sports Correspondent

Going into the District 16 Williamsport Little League tournament, expectations were very high for the Saugus American Little League all-stars, and so far they have not disappointed.

After starting the tournament with a 17-0 win over the West Lynn Nationals and a 24-2 win over the Americans just kept rolling along, earning a berth in the district finals.

The Americans did endure a bit of a scare last Wednesday from the Pine Hill all-stars from Lynn in a game played under the lights in Revere. Although the Americans eventually won the game, 12-2, things looked a little dicey in the early going.

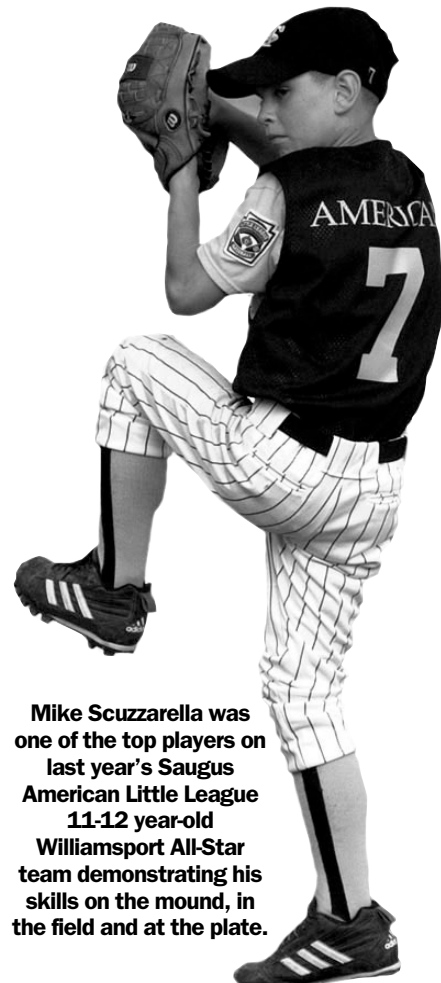
After they jumped out to a 4-0

lead in the first inning, Pine Hill scored twice in the second inning and were threatening to score some more. The Pine Hill rally was killed, however, when shortstop Mike Scuzzarella fielded a grounder, faked a throw to first and got the runner leaning the wrong way on the bases.

Craig Cole, who recorded the complete game victory for the locals, then struckout the next two batters to end the threat.

"Pine Hill gave us a battle," coach Rob Rochenski said.

"They had us thinking, probably for the first time in the tournament so far. It's funny to say that one defensive play by a shortstop would make that big of a difference in a 12-2 game, but that play by Scuzzarella was pretty big. The next inning we put four or five more runs on the board and that was pretty much it."



Mike Scuzzarella was one of the top players on last year's Saugus American Little League 11-12 year-old Williamsport All-Star team demonstrating his skills on the mound, in the field and at the plate.

SAUGUS ALL-STARS ENERGIZE THE COMMUNITY

We can relate.

For more than 33 years, Wheelabrator Saugus has been providing clean energy to the community. So we can appreciate it when a bunch of ballplayers, who are playing for the love of the game and the opportunity to

represent their town, give the entire community a boost with their unyielding effort. Best of luck to all of this year's All-Stars in their quest to light up Saugus with another championship.



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