

Aptos' dream season ends



From left, Andrew Biancardi, Kevin Eichhorn, manager Dave Anderson, Tyler Raymond, Brian Godoy, Cesar Zermeno and Mark Lamothe react to their 5-2 loss to Harlem on Tuesday in the Little League World Series.

Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel



Biancardi, the Aptos shortstop, tags out Harlem's Spencer White in the fourth inning Tuesday.

All-Stars still happy after loss to Harlem

WILLIAMSPORT, PA.

Perhaps no one better exemplifies the ideal of Little League Baseball than Aptos catcher Drew McCauley.

Here's a kid who was literally wounded in this, the Little League World Series. Following the Aptos Little Leaguers' elimination Tuesday at the hands of Mid-Atlantic champion Harlem, McCauley showed off his various injuries.

He lifted up the leg of his shorts to show off a casaba-sized bruise he received when a Kyle Anderson fastball slipped under his glove and into his rear area a game earlier.

Then there's the near-concussion he received after a fastball bounced up and drove his facemask into his



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head earlier in the same game. And finally, on Tuesday, he suffered another nick, this time to his right hand, as Kevin Eichhorn pitched to the very first Harlem hitter.

But through it all, this little champion smiles bright, showing off his braces, and says, "That's the way it goes."

McCauley and his teammates made an incredible, improbable and altogether unforgettable run through the maze of Little League this season. But they came up short.

And that's OK.

Not a single player held his head in shame. Not a single parent was upset about the team's elimination.

While a few tears were shed, this was a moment of celebration for Aptos, a team that captured the hearts of all of Santa Cruz County.

And they represented us well.

"We're sad we lost, but on the other hand, we're glad we made it this far," McCauley said. "What are the chances of a team from Aptos making it to Williamsport?"

It all started in a local All-Star tournament, and then to San Jose for a regional, then to Petaluma for a district tournament, and then to San Bernardino to the Western Region final.

Aptos survived every challenge, up until this final one. Harlem used the long ball to end the dream

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'It's been great for us. We're stars in our own town.'

KEVIN FARMER,
APTOS FIRST BASEMAN

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Aptos

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season that will forever live as a dream season — not just for the players and their families but for everyone who caught Little League fever.

McCauley was struck by how the team mastered each step on the way to Williamsport, the more people seemed to care. In addition to a PBS film crew that was this team's constant companion, there was newspaper and television coverage to rival a moon landing.

And that was OK with McCauley. He liked it. He ate it up.

"I like the attention," he said after the 5-2 loss Tuesday to Harlem at Lamade Stadium. "It's fun being on TV and in the papers. It doesn't happen to many kids."

Indeed. Not many get to experience what McCauley and his teammates have just gone through. Some teams couldn't handle it all, but this club seemed to ride the wave with a happy-go-lucky air that served it well.

"It's been great for us," Aptos first baseman Kevin Farmer said. "We're stars in our own town."

And they're not yet teenagers. How about that for some stories to tell for the

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APTOS CATCHER DREW MCCAULEY

next 50 to 60 years?

Tyler Raymond, a 12-year-old who stands 6 feet 1 inch and was the hero of San Bernardino, had the chance again to possibly get Aptos back into Tuesday's game.

He didn't deliver, as he had earlier in the game with a two-run double.

But that, too, was OK. "We tried our hardest," he said. "We just got beat."

No big deal, they lost a baseball game.

One intangible this team didn't lack was its sense of self, and what the whole experience means. They can be proud for making it as far as they did, and they can be proud of every inning they played.

"We're not sad," Raymond said. "We're just glad we got this far."

So it's back home to Aptos for the families, likely by the weekend, and for the players it's back to school. They've already missed most of the first week.

They are not sad about that, either. "I kind of want to go back to school,"



Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel

Friends and family cheer for Aptos during Tuesday's game at the Little League World Series against Harlem, which Aptos lost 5-2.

Jarred Bachan said. "But I'd still rather play baseball."

Well, they can be safe in the knowledge that they played more baseball this summer than most kids play all year. They're tired, they're a bit beat up, but they are still smiling.

"We had a good game, a good season,"

Bachan said.

"We're pretty happy."

They can bet the folks back home are pretty happy, too.

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