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Aptos catcher Drew McCauley consoles Brian Godoy after a fifth-inning home run.

APTOS BOWS OUT OF SERIES

LITTLE LEAGUE TEAM FALLS
ONE WIN SHORT OF SEMIFINALS

Baseball By David Pollak
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SOUTH WILLIAMSPORT, Pa. —

When it was over, when a 5-2 loss Tuesday eliminated Aptos from the Little League World Series, the big topic of conversation wasn't the Harlem home run that proved to be the game-winner.

It was the trot around the bases that followed.

Andrew Diaz's two-run homer in the fourth inning not only helped bring an end to Aptos' dream season, but also showed how fragile sportsmanship can be, even at the most high-minded level of youth sports.

Aptos was trying to join the field of eight teams — four from the United

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Back home, classmates at school — and adults playing hooky — cheer on Aptos players. **PAGE 1B**

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States, four from around the world — in the championship round.

But Diaz prevented that. And, after hitting the home run, he waved the ball goodbye. Rounding third base, Diaz broke into an exaggerated strut to home plate.

"He was dancing around. That was unsportsmanlike conduct and they have rules against that," said Claudia McCauley, mother of Aptos catcher, Drew. The outnumbered Aptos backers booed, one of the rare times that sound has been heard here this week. When Diaz reached the dugout, he got another earful from Harlem Manager Morris McWilliams.

After the game, Aptos Manager Dave Anderson talked about other things, how proud he was of his team for getting this far, how well the boys were taking it.

"They wanted to win the game, but I can tell you that in 15 minutes, they had forgotten it," Anderson said. "They had already asked if they could go swimming. They're 12 years old."

And then he talked about their reaction to Diaz's showboating.

"The kids didn't like that. They said some things that I won't repeat to you," Anderson said. He did suggest, however, that Diaz was playing to the TV cameras.

"They're here for one pur-

pose only, to be on ESPN," he added. "We were here to have fun."

Anderson did give Harlem's third-base coach credit for immediately coming into the Aptos dugout and apologizing for Diaz's performance.

McWilliams called his player's conduct "overzealous."

"That's not a practice of ours, and it's not acceptable," the Harlem manager said. "We've explained that to him and we've moved on."

But he denied TV was a factor.

"This is a child hitting a home run who's going around the bases and he says, 'Yeah, we did it!' and he went overboard," McWilliams said. "It's no more than that."

Diaz was not among the three players McWilliams selected to join him at the post-game news conference.

The home run aftermath distracted attention from a well-played showdown between Aptos and Harlem. Each team was 1-1 in the series, and only the winner would advance to the semifinals.

It was Aptos's first game at Howard J. Lamade Stadium, the traditional series site since 1959. The crowd of 12,300 — including thousands on the terraced outfield hillsides — more than doubled the earlier number at adjacent Volunteer Stadium.

Neither team scored in the first three innings. Aptos pitcher Kevin Eichhorn gave

up only two hits over that period, getting out of a first-and-third jam in the second by striking out Diaz and Spencer White.

Harlem pitcher Javier Lopez was even stronger, giving up only a single to McCauley over the first half of the game.

In the fourth, both teams found their offense.

Aptos scored twice in the top half of the inning when Kyle Anderson and Andrew Biancardi each singled. Both advanced on a passed ball and scored when Tyler Raymond doubled to the center-field wall.

The lead didn't last. In the bottom of the fourth, McWilliams interrupted Alibay Barkley's at-bat for an extended conference. Barkley hammered the next pitch for a solo home run.

His coach told him to keep his head down and look for the curveball, he said after the game. That worked.

Three batters later, Fernando Frias was on first when Diaz launched the ball over the hedges behind the fence for a 3-2 Harlem lead.

The lead grew to 5-2 in the fifth when Brian Godoy replaced Eichhorn as the Aptos pitcher and gave up a two-run homer to Jeremy Lopez.

Aptos threatened in the sixth. Biancardi ended up at second base when his leadoff single to right was misplayed. With one out, McCauley walked and the runners advanced on a passed ball.

The next two batters had played key roles in Aptos' victories throughout the tournament, but not this time. Raymond grounded out to the pitcher, and Godoy struck out swinging.

There was no evidence the loss damaged parental pride.

Dave Farmer, father of first baseman Kevin, acknowledged his son didn't have a strong series at bat.

"But he played well defensively, and this is a team of role players," he said. "We didn't lose it on errors, and that's important."

Marc Godoy said he was a little sad to see it all end. "No one likes to lose, but it's baseball. You don't win every game."

His son, Brian, hit the home run that sparked Aptos' 11-8 win over North Carolina. This time, he made the final out. No matter, Marc Godoy was still in his son's corner.

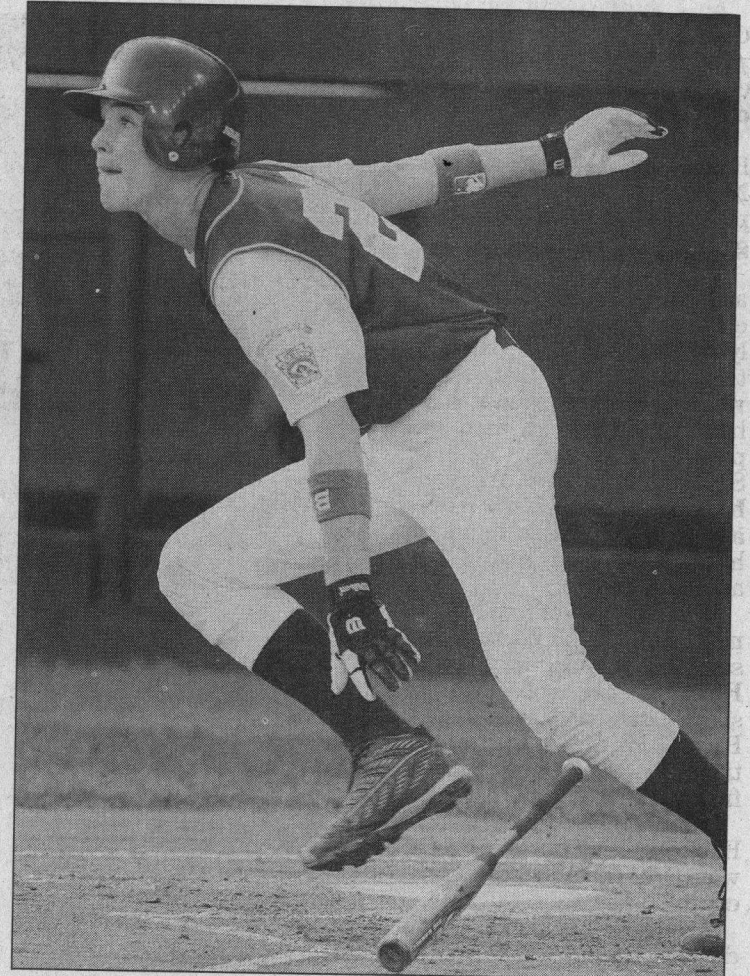
"I'm glad he was the last batter up there. I'm proud of my boy," Godoy said. "He's a scrapper."

Brian Godoy agreed with his manager that the team quickly got over the disappointment of losing.

"No one's sad or anything now," he said about an hour after the game.

And his manager offered an explanation why his team was handling it so well.

"For us, it's not the end of the world if you lose," said Anderson, whose team hopes to return home Thursday. "Kids



RUSTY KENNEDY — ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tyler Raymond drove in both runs for Aptos with a fourth-inning double in a 5-2 Little League World Series loss to Harlem.

in our world skateboard. They go surfing, they go body surfing, they go boogie boarding, they do all these other things. Baseball and basketball? Is it

time to do that? OK, cool."

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