

# Aptos rolls into finals



Jarred Bachan scores Aptos' third run Sunday, taking advantage of a passed ball. Aptos went on to beat Taylorsville, Utah, 4-1.

Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel photos

## Little Leaguers game away from Series

By JULIE JAG

SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

SAN BERNARDINO — Aptos has the funk.

Thanks in part to the morale-boosting antics of reserve J.B. Burns and Raymond Tyler, the Aptos All-Stars defeated Taylorsville, Utah, 4-1 Sunday at Al Houghton Stadium.

The victory eliminated Utah and advanced Aptos to the finals of the Western Region Little League Tournament, where Aptos meets the team from Arrowhead, Ariz., in a fight for the right to play in the Little League World Series in Williamsport, Pa.

Arizona edged Peccole of Las Vegas earlier Sunday, 4-3 in eight innings.

Aptos lagged after the first inning, but a pep talk by Burns — who donned a red, curly clown's wig and danced around singing George Clinton's "We Got the Funk" while slapping his teammates' hands — got the team back in the groove.

"It kind of motivates them sometimes," Burns

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APTOS MANAGER DAVE ANDERSON

said.

After a first inning where Aptos left two on base, then allowed Utah's Austin Maddy to score, the All-Stars needed some reviving. Burns and Raymond's clowning must have worked some magic.

Brian Godoy reached on a fielder's choice and advanced on a Drew McCauley single. Jarred Bachan then joined the duo when Utah pitcher Jeff Lavulo and second baseman Maddy collided trying to field his pop near first.

Kevin Eichhorn brought Godoy and McCauley in when his blazing single glanced off Lavulo's left shin and into center field. Bachan, who advanced to third on the play, then also crossed when Lavulo threw a wild pitch to Kyle Anderson, making the score 3-1.

Eichhorn said more than scoring two runs, the hit brought him out of a two-game hitting slump.

"I didn't get a hit in two games, but (tonight) I was seeing a lot better," Eichhorn said. "I just felt like I could get a hit."

Both teams had nine straight batters retired before Aptos broke loose again in the sixth.

Aptos loaded the bases after Andrew Biancardi doubled to center field, Worden walked and Mark Lamothe was hit by a pitch. Biancardi was forced out on a fielder's choice, hit into by Tyler Raymond, but Worden scored when McCauley hit an RBI single to center field.



■ **SUNDAY'S SEMIFINALS:** No. 1 Aptos, 4, No. 4 Taylorsville, Utah, 1; No. 2 Arrowhead, Ariz., 4, No. 3 Peccole, Nev., 3.

■ **TITLE GAME:** Aptos vs. Arrowhead, Ariz., 7 p.m. Tuesday. Winners goes to Little League World Series.

■ **TV:** ESPN2 (live)

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# Aptos

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Lavulo threw 5 $\frac{2}{3}$  inning for Utah before Will Draper came in for relief. Lavulo gave up four runs on six hits, while striking out five on two errors.

Utah manager Dave Gray said playing under the lights had a negative effect on his team, which hadn't done so until Sunday night.

"People discount that, but I think that was probably as big a factor as anything," he said. "You've just got to adjust to it. We adjusted to it after the second inning."

After the All-Stars' shabby defensive play against West Anaheim on Friday, Aptos looked solid Sunday. Perhaps the defensive play of the game came when Tyler Raymond clutched Draper's fly ball next to the fence in far right field. The team made no errors.

That may have been why Aptos manager Dave Anderson wasn't concerned after Utah scored its run early.

"We felt pretty confident that we were going to get a couple runs if we could get Kevin (Eichhorn) to settle down a little bit," he said.

Eichhorn quickly did. He pitched all six innings, throwing nine strikeouts while allowing one run on five hits and no errors.

Only one game stands between Aptos and the Little League World Series. That game will be played at 7 p.m. Tuesday and will be aired on ESPN2.