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Home Run Barrage Lifts LBC to Desert Classic Championship

Submitted by Anne McNally



The LBC 12U Fall Ball Team Photo provided

Northern California's Lamorinda Baseball Club (LBC) 12U Fall Ball Team won the Las Vegas Desert Classic by defeating the South Bay Diamondbacks, also from Northern California, 11-3 in the championship game.

The LBC Fall Ball Team was made up of eight players from the 2008 11U TBS National Champion Lamorinda Cougars. In addition, the team was joined by two other 2008 Elite World Series participants: Michael Palos who traveled to Orlando with the Simi Predators and Noah Burnham of the 2008 10U Quarterfinalists Lamorinda Monarchs. Longtime Cougar Willie MacIver rounded out the squad as the team's shortstop.

In the championship game, starting pitcher Johnny Breidenthal allowed 2 runs in 5 innings for the win. Tournament MVP Drew Downing came on to close out the game as he had successfully done throughout the tournament.

The tournament's most highly anticipated matchup occurred in the semifinals when LBC was pitted against the San Diego Stars. LBC's starting pitcher Daniel Slominski went the distance in the 3-1 victory.

The scoring for LBC began in the bottom of the first inning with a solo homerun by Palos. An inning later, D.B. Vidal drove in MacIver with a two-out single. In the bottom of the fifth, Breidenthal led off with a double off the wall. After MacIver's sacrifice bunt, Breidenthal scored on a wild pitch to provide the 2-run cushion.

The hard-hitting Stars didn't go away quietly in the top of the sixth inning. With the top of the order up, the Stars' leadoff hitter smashed a liner up the middle that was snagged by Slominski. The next hitter drove a ball to deep right centerfield that was tracked down by Walter Tucker. Then, with All-American Brady Aiken in the on-deck circle, third baseman Vidal made a play on a hard-hit grounder to end the game.

Earlier in the day, Joe DeMers pitched a complete game 1-hitter in LBC's 9-1 win over the Las Vegas Warriors in the quarterfinals. The game was broken open by a grand slam by Slominski.

The story of the tournament was the power displayed by the LBC team. Even with a stiff desert wind blowing in from centerfield throughout the event, LBC pounded out 13 home runs in seven games. The attack was led by Palos and DeMers, who each hit 5 homers. Slominiski, who only played in three games, added two homeruns and Breidenthal another.

Leadoff hitter Conner McNally and two-hitter Tucker consistently got on-base to set the table for the homerun hitters. Clutch line drives were also provided by Jake Rider, Downing, and Burnham to contribute to LBC's 73 runs in the event.

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