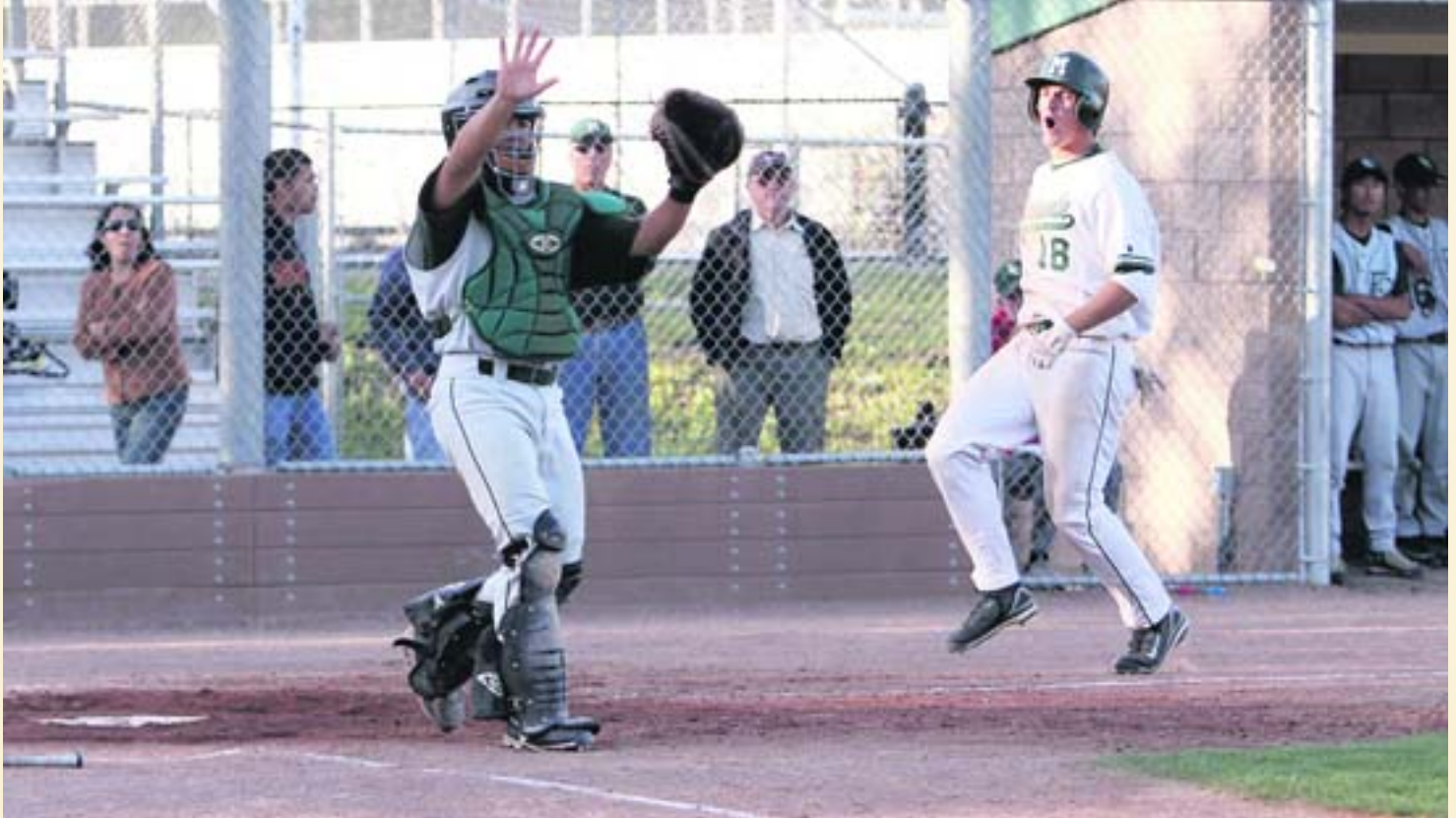


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Miramonte Outduels El Cerrito

By Jack Fernbacher



Joey Epperson gets excited after scoring the only run of the game Photo Jordan Fong

Miramonte's game plan going into its first NCS playoff game on May 22nd was to capitalize on El Cerrito's mistakes. And the strategy paid off.

— No. 1 Miramonte defeated No. 8 El Cerrito 1-0 after scoring its lone run of the game in the bottom of the sixth inning. In the sixth, senior right fielder Matt Lloyd hit into what should have been a 6-3-1 double play, but El Cerrito failed to convert the throw from second and senior centerfielder Joey Epperson crossed home plate.

— Senior Andrew Kjar pitched brilliantly for the Mats as he only gave up one hit and struck out twelve in a complete game.

— "Andrew was our whole offense and our whole defense," said head coach Vince Dell'Aquila. "He kept us in the ball game, and allowed us to take the lead with just the one late run."

— Miramonte had a good chance to score in the first inning when it had the bases loaded with two outs, but senior shortstop Mike Reuvekamp was caught stealing home.

— Throughout the game, the Mats were aggressive on the base paths. Two players were picked off and two were caught stealing.

□ "We were trying to be really aggressive," said Dell'Aquila. "Our goal was to have them slip up and make mistakes."

□ Epperson was aggressive on the bases and at the plate with three hits and one stolen base. The Mats blew some early chances to score runs and only mustered five hits in the game.

□ "We made some adjustments in our offense. Our players knew it was a big game, and were anxious at the plate. Because we are the number one seed, there is a lot of pressure for us to win."

□ El Cerrito's ace Mark Kolding also pitched a complete game and held Miramonte scoreless for five innings, despite three errors behind him. Neither team had an extra-base hit in the game, as the batters mostly hit ground balls or struck out.

□ Miramonte's small-ball ended up being enough for the Mats to win the quarterfinal game and advance to the next round.

□ Next Up in NCS Baseball:

□ The DFAL champion Miramonte Matadors took on the 5th ranked Analy Tigers after press time on Tuesday night. Check our website for updates:

□ <http://www.lamorindaweekly.com>.

□ If the Mats prevail, they will play for the NCS Championship at the end of the week against the winner of Wednesday's game between Sir Francis Drake (ranked #3) and Novato (#7).

□ Also in NCS baseball, after a first round bye the #2 ranked Campolindo Cougars lost to Novato in round 2 last Saturday.

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Pitcher Andrew Kjar Photo Ohlen Alexander

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