

Little League Championship Game



Hills North take out Inaugural Little League Championship

The scene was set; it was a cold Thursday night at Kelso Park (Softball Complex) in Milperra you could smell the tension and anticipation in the air. The crowd was buzzing; people had come from everywhere to witness this amazing event. Hills North and Cronulla South knew exactly what was at stake on this special occasion, the winner to advance to the National Little League Tournament in Queensland on the 5th and 8th of June. A special guest in the form of Grant Weir the new National Manager – Game Development from the ABF came to have a look at the talent that NSW had to offer in Little League. Little did he know that he would witness possibly one of the best junior games of baseball and definitely one that will be extremely hard to beat in coming years?

It was fairly clear from the outset of the game that the team that could control their nerves and adapt to the conditions would come out as victors in the game. After having 3 full days rest both teams were ready to go with their paramount team and their top pitchers. Runs were going to be hard to come by.

Cronulla South seemed to handle the early pressure better than Hills North. Cronulla came out of the blocks firing on all cylinders while Hills were caught unaware and weren't ready for the onslaught. A few fielding errors from the Hills North side cost them and before they knew it they were 3 – 0 down after the first innings. It took Hills a few digs to get into their rhythm, they pulled back 2 runs in the top of the third innings and things were beginning to get close. Cronulla were still in the game but just couldn't seem to get themselves runs when they needed it.

Hills squared the ledger at the top of the fifth inning and all signs were pointing to an extra innings game. The sixth inning was an exciting one, nerves and pressure not only from the players but the coaches as well was evident. Parents and supporters were on the edge of their seats in anticipation of every pitch, every hit, every throw it was drama packed. After the regulation six innings the game was tied at 3 – 3. We were moving into extra innings with a maximum of nine to be played.

The scene was set for someone to do something special to break this deadlock. We went to the seventh inning pressure was building, all the players could smell the opportunity to go to the National Tournament. The seventh inning produced no runs, Cronulla had a great opportunity to possibly win the game but once again that key word PRESSURE seemed to come into play again Cronulla just couldn't produce the knockout blow required.

The eighth inning followed and it proved to be the final innings of the game. Hills took the lead at the top of the innings but still had the task to defend their lead. Hills North pitcher Zac Shepherd stood tall on the mound and shut Cronulla South out and completed the victory for Hills.

A credit to both teams for such a wonderful game of baseball, both teams showed great sportsmanship throughout the whole game. Cronulla South and Hills North showed exactly what Little League is all about, congratulations to both teams for a wonderful Little League tournament. Unfortunately as is always the case there can only be one winner. It was very difficult to separate the two teams and the score line showed that to us.

Congratulations to Hills North who now progress to the National Little League Tournament in Queensland at Redlands Baseball Club from the 5th to the 8th of June 2008 to represent New South Wales. Hopefully Hills North can progress through the National Tournament and represent Australia in the Asian Little League Tournament. Good luck Hills North.



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Thanks must go out to Craig Richardson and the staff at the Kelso Park Softball Complex for providing us with the opportunity to use the great facility at Kelso Park with such short notice. The ground was excellently prepared and I'm sure teams enjoyed playing a game under lights; it seems to make the game more of a spectacle. This championship game was definitely a great demonstration of how Little League will grow within NSW and Australia in the future.

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Kelso Park (Softball Complex), 27/3/08

Box Score

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Hills North	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	1	4
Cronulla South	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3

**Extra Innings 7 and 8



(Hills North Little League Champion 2008)

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