



Late Inning Heroics Make the Midsummer Classic a True Classic

On Tuesday July 18th, the best of the MCBL descended on Palisades Credit Union Park for the second annual MCBL All Star Game. There was no shortage of memorable moments, but none grander than the Pineland Starz's Ryan Keen's walk-off triple to win the game for the Nationals 6-5.

The home Nationals struck first in the opening frame when KJ Stewart of the Hudson River Hawks walked North Jersey's Anthony Domiguez with the bases loaded to score Pascack's Justin Ayala.

They tacked on two more in the home half of the second beginning with a one out double from Troy Miller from Shore Baseball. He advanced to third on a wild pitch and Pineland's Darwin Tavarez brought him home with a double. Ayala then proceeded to score Tavarez with a base hit to give the Nationals a 3-0 lead.

American roared back to take their first lead, scoring four runs over the next two innings. The Horn Frogs' Brandon Lopez gave up the first in the top of the 3rd. The right hander walked Vinny Carlesi of the Hudson River Hawks, and with one out, Overpeck's Peter Rumora followed with a single. Then with two gone, the Randolph Chiefs representative Shaun Klier plated Carlesi with a one-bagger.

With the lead now cut to two, the American All-Stars batted around in the 4th to score three. After CP Royals pitcher Chris Martucci struck out the first batter he faced, he gave up a pair of free passes to two Bergen Mallers. Jimmy Whalen was hit by a pitch and Matthew DeBlasio walked. Another Bergen representative, Ryan Adleman, followed that up with a single to load the bases.

It was free bases that came back to bite Martucci again with the bases juiced. Carlesi was struck by a pitch to score the first run and Rumora was walked to get the second. Klier's RBI base hit made it three runs in the inning and gave American a 4-3 advantage.

In the bottom of the 6th, the Nationals got a run back to knot the contest up at four. Pascack Valley Cat outfielder Bob Abbot led off the frame with a base hit off of Randolph's Conlan Farrell. The left fielder was brought home off a double from his Pascack teammate Jack Fischer.

The see-saw battle continued when American scored in the very next inning with an RBI triple from Hudson River's Matt Ferrara that scored DiMaggio's Connor Walsh.

And after the Nationals went quietly in the 8th, it was last licks time in Pomona, NY. Eli Camner from the Horned Frogs and Darwin Tavarez from Pineland, both reached safely on defensive miscues. Then Hudson infielder made a diving play to his left at second to prevent a run to score on CP Royal Alex Kokos fielder's choice. With one out, Pinelands All Star Shane Albertson popped up for the second out in the frame. The game was now in Ryan Keen's hands. The Pineland Stars player blasted a triple over the head of John Fleck in center and bounce off the wall to score the two runs and secure the victory for the Nationals in walk-off style.

Thomas Terzulli, Jr.