

Yamanashi wins Japan-Metro Classic

Written by Jim Ecker

Thursday, 13 August 2015 22:31 - Last Updated Thursday, 13 August 2015 22:38



Both ballclubs and more than 600 fans enjoyed the Japan-Metro All-Star Classic at Veterans Memorial Stadium on Thursday night, but the visitors from Yamanashi enjoyed the game a little bit more than the hosts.

The Japanese team rallied from a 2-0 deficit and topped the Metro All-Stars, 6-2, with an impressive display of pitching, defense and timely hitting.

The Japanese pitchers struck out 14 batters and allowed only four hits in the nine-inning game. One of their outfielders made a beautiful diving catch and they committed only one error all night.

"They're talented," said Lucas Larson, an infielder from Jefferson. "They're very disciplined. They don't do many things wrong. You can tell they're well-coached."

The Japanese team raised its record to 4-1 on its tour of Iowa this week, including a 3-1 mark against all-star teams from the Des Moines area.

The Metro All-Stars took a 1-0 lead in the first inning on an RBI single by Larson and made it 2-0 in the fourth on an RBI double by Trey Beckman of Prairie, but Yamanashi's bats came alive in the later innings.

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The Japanese scored four runs in the sixth inning for a 4-2 lead, powered by a pair of long triples to begin the frame. They made it 6-2 in the seventh inning on a towering two-run homer by Genki Mizukami.

The Metro All-Stars used a continuous 15-man batting order and used eight different pitchers, giving everyone on the team a chance to showcase their talent before an audience that appreciated the efforts by both teams.



"Great turnout. Excellent turnout. I was impressed," said Jim VanScoyoc, the Iowa Hall of Fame coach from Norway who led the Metro All-Stars. "It wasn't just one group of people. It was a lot of different kinds of people.

"I enjoyed it a whole lot," he said. "It was nice for our ballplayers to see the enthusiasm and aggressiveness that the Japanese players bring forth."

The Metro All-Stars also made good plays, perhaps none better than when Larson -- playing shortstop -- made a relay throw from left field and gunned down a runner at the plate with a perfect throw to catcher Corbin Day of Prairie.

Blake Hargens of Kennedy started on the mound for the Metro All-Stars and pitched two shutout innings. Sammy Lizarraga of Kennedy, Bryce Alberts of Prairie, Colton Knox of Jefferson, Drew Yanecek of Prairie and Zach Daniels of Kennedy all tossed one shutout inning.

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Daniels scored both of Kennedy's runs in the leadoff spot.

The players and coaches from both teams exchanged gifts after the game and posed for a group picture on the field.

"It was a whole lot of fun," said Larson. "I'm just glad they did it my senior year. It was a blast.

"I hope kids in the future get to do it, because it was a great experience."

The Metro Sports Report staged Thursday night's event. The Cedar Rapids Kernels, the Premier Mortgage Company and Iowa AAU were sponsors.

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