

# Norwalk 15s off to perfect start

From B1

ond, Petridis laced a ball to first base. The ball hopped off the shoulder of the first baseman and down the right field line, scoring Daniello and Matt Cranston to make it 4-0.

Second baseman Leon Fleming following with a booming triple to deep right center field and it seemed as if Norwalk was on their way to another easy five-inning win.

However, Trumbull scored four runs in the top of the fourth off Petridis, including a two-run home run by first baseman Ryan Monoco.

Petridis was lifted in favor of Latella, who gave up an RBI single before escaping the jam with Norwalk still in the lead 5-4.

The runs in the fourth

inning were the first given up by a Norwalk pitcher in the district tournament, ending an 18-inning scoreless streak.

Norwalk wasted no time responding, turning in a four-run inning of their own. Trumbull starter Jeff Bivona issued a lead off walk before giving up back-to-back singles to Cooksey and Scott Angeley. That brought up Diaz, who proceeded to crush a grand slam over the wall in left field and give Norwalk a 9-4 lead.

"We were a little dead before that hit," coach Daniello said. "That really sparked us and got us going, and we were able to put it away from there."

After Latella turned in a 1-2-3 inning, Norwalk scored three more runs in the bottom of the



Norwalk's James Cooksey heads for third base during Thursday's 15-year-old Babe Ruth district championship game against Trumbull. Norwalk took the title with a 14-4 victory.

frame highlighted by two errors to take a 12-4 lead into the sixth inning.

Latella retired Trumbull in order again in the sixth before Norwalk ended the game in the bottom of the sixth. With the bases loaded, Cooksey hit a

ground ball to the short-stop. Zack O'Connor came in to score from third and Daniello raced around all the way from second base on the throw to score the winning run.

Norwalk now has two weeks off before beginning play in the state

tournament.

"We have a lot of work left to do," Anthony Daniello added. "We have almost two weeks off and we are going to work some things out and hopefully come up with a good showing in states."

# Ridgefield National unleashes barrage in win over Norwalk

From B1

home run over the fence in left field.

Nate Cutting and Ed Petrillo also had hits in the inning while Jared Smith (double), Brendan Hanzlik and Tom Arduino worked out walks.

"I'm very proud of the fact that they were down 9-0 and they didn't give up," Newcomb said. "They didn't give up. They could have rolled over, but they didn't. I'll never say with this team that we're ever completely out of it."

Norwalk actually came within a couple of inches of making this one very interesting. After the three-run home run by Evans got Norwalk to within 9-3, Petrillo got things going again with two outs with a sharp single to center field. Arduino walked, chasing Ridgefield starter Chris Eckstrom from the game in favor of McKay Flanagan. Cutting greeted him with an infield single to load the bases and Smith worked out a walk to force in a run to make it 9-4.

Then came the turning point. Kevin Love worked a full count and ripped a line drive into left field that started sinking as Bova came charging in. But

Bova went down to his shoe strings to pick the ball off the turf for what might have been a game-saving catch.

"If that ball gets by in the outfield it's a different game," Newcomb said. "That would have given us more life. It makes it a 9-6 lead with my number three and four hitters coming up. And they've been hitting the ball."

Ridgefield did hit the ball. Leadoff batter Wright Lindgren went 3-for-4 with three runs scored while Dylan Maher went 4-for-4 with a double, one RBI and one run scored. Alex Rowella had a two-run double in the first inning.

However, after the game, Burke told his team it was Bova's catch that made the difference.

"This was like a boxing match," Burke said. "We were ahead on the card, but we got knocked down. If that ball gets in that's three more runs and it's 9-6. Certainly, that was the play of the game because they were coming back."

Both teams received nice performances from their relief pitchers with left-hander Paul Salata of Norwalk allowing just three hits and one run with three strikeouts and no walks

over the final three innings in relief of Hanzlik.

"Paul has done a very good job all this year," Newcomb said. "He throws strikes. He's got a decent breaking ball. Given the contrast to (Hanzlik) with one being righty and the other lefty and one a hard thrower and the other a junk-ball pitcher, he really shut them down."

Flanagan threw the final 3.1 innings for Ridgefield, which was missing two pitchers attending the New York Yankees game. Flanagan, not one of Ridgefield's normal pitchers, kept Norwalk in check, allowing no runs on just two hits with six strikeouts and four walks.

"He was battling some nerves," Burke said. "It wasn't easy for him, but he did a great job."

Norwalk collected just five hits, but left 11 men on base. Ridgefield pitchers issued eight walks and the team made four errors.

Norwalk just couldn't take advantage.

"You get a duck snort here and a Texas Leaguer there like they got, and then you get a long ball, things change," Newcomb said. "The good thing is this is pool play and we get to come right back at it on Sunday.

I think we'll be ready for it."

The game featured a strange moment in the second inning. Flanagan led off with an infield single and Coyle launched his two-run home run to left-center. In his excitement, with his teammates crowded around him, Flanagan never touched home plate, which would have led to an out had Norwalk appealed home. Ridgefield's players also made contact with Coyle before he touched home, which could have been called interference.

Evans, the starting catcher, motioned for Newcomb to appeal home plate. But Newcomb thought Coyle missed third, so Norwalk appealed that bag instead. Coyle was called safe, allowing Ridgefield to avoid what might have been an early momentum changer.

Norwalk did eventually attempt to appeal home as well, but a team can only make one appeal per play.

"We saw the runner miss third. We all saw it," Newcomb said. "It would have changed the complexion of the game. It might have given us a spark. It would have deflated them, for sure. But they put the ball in play all day long. That's the bottom line."

# Federer going after 15th Grand Slam title against Roddick

From B1

his pregnant wife, his parents and other supporters in the guest seats above a scoreboard, before making the same gesture toward the Royal Box, where past greats of the game Bjorn Borg and Rod Laver were among the invited guests.

Winning a Wimbledon semifinal — indeed, any Grand Slam semifinal — is all so very been-there, done-that for Federer: He is 20-3 in major semis over his career, reaching 16 of the past 17 major finals.

"I know what's on the line," Federer said. "I hope I can play another good match."

His previous match against Haas, on June 1 in the fourth round of the French Open, was much tighter. Haas won the first two sets that day —

drew within five points of victory, even — before Federer came back en route to winning the title at Roland Garros to complete a career Grand Slam and tie Sampras with 14 Grand Slam championships.

This time, Federer was quite close to perfect. He won a remarkable 72 of 83 points on his serve, did not face a single break point and finished with 49 winners and

only 15 unforced errors.

"You know, that's the way it goes playing against him," Haas said. "There aren't really any weaknesses."

Roddick celebrated rather emotionally after finishing off No. 3 Andy Murray of Britain 6-4, 4-6, 7-6 (7), 7-6 (5) in Friday's second semifinal. The 2003 U.S. Open champion, still seeking a second major title, dropped to his knees,

leaned forward and covered his head with his hands.

Leaving the court, Roddick paused to enjoy the moment, thankful that all of the changes he's made over the past several months paid dividends: tweaking his diet to drop 15 pounds, hiring a new coach, working more than ever to improve his returns, his volleys, his backhand.

"To be honest, the last

couple of years, I didn't know if I'd ever get a chance to play for another Grand Slam title," Roddick said. "Now I get to. It's just a dream."

This part might cause some nightmares before Sunday: Roddick is 2-18 against Federer, including losses in the 2004 and 2005 Wimbledon finals, as well as the 2006 U.S. Open final.

"I've had plenty of time to study his game, to understand his game," Federer said. "He's always played me also quite differently every single time."

Then again, Roddick was 2-6 previously against Murray, who was trying to become the first British man to reach the Wimbledon final since the 1930s and, of course, received plenty of partisan support from the 15,000 or so spectators.

# Venus faces lil' sis in 4th Wimbledon final

WIMBLEDON, England (AP) — Venus Williams is just about the perfect older sibling: She supports Serena endlessly, protects her fiercely and even lets her pick which bedroom she wants when they're on the road.

Where does Venus draw the line? At Grand Slam championships.

The sisters face each other again in a major final, meeting Saturday for the Wimbledon title for the fourth time.

"I'm happy for her to be in the final, but I have to face her and defeat her," Venus said after reaching her eighth final at the All England Club by routing top-ranked Dinara Safina 6-1, 6-0. "I don't necessarily want her to lose, but for sure I want me to win."

After their showdown, the sisters become teammates for the doubles final, where they are the defending champions.

# Yankees win eighth in nine tries

From B1

Burnett (7-4) allowed both runs, struck out seven and walked two. He got his first three strikeouts on 96 mph fastballs, then rung up his final four with curveballs in the low 80s.

Since the loss at Boston, he's allowed three earned runs in 27 1-3 innings (0.99 ERA).

"It's not so much speed, it's the location," Yankees manager Joe Girardi said.

Phil Coke and Phil Hughes split the eighth, with Hughes retiring Vernon Wells on an inning-ending grounder with a runner on second. For now, Hughes has supplanted struggling Brian Bruney as Mariano Rivera's primary setup man.

"I'm just going to continue to go out there and throw when I'm called upon. I don't really care, man. Everybody's caught up in what inning," Bruney said. "It doesn't matter."

Bruney has allowed three runs in 4 2-3 innings since returning from the disabled list.

"We need to get him going, and we need to get him right," Girardi said. "We're going to pick some innings, and they'll still be important innings."

Since he's been shifted from the rotation to the bullpen in early June, Hughes has gained 3-4 mph on his fastball to 95-96.

"I can let it go," he said.

Rivera struck out two in a perfect ninth for his 21st save in 22 chances, No. 503 of his career. Outside of Rivera, the pecking order has been uncertain.

"It didn't really seem like we settled into any particular role right out of the gate, because we struggled," Coke said. "Lately, it's been a little bit of a free-for-all, but we've all been effective."

Brian Tallet (5-6) gave up three runs — two earned — six hits and four walks in six innings as Toronto lost for the fifth time in six games. He walked Brett Gardner and Derek Jeter starting the fifth, then fielded Johnny Damon's drag bunt and flipped the ball low, a play at first ruled an error but then called a single.

Tallet walked Mark Teixeira on four pitches, forcing in a run and putting the Yankees ahead 2-1. Another run scored on a passed ball by Raul Chavez, who appeared to get crossed up on the first pitch to Cano.

"I put myself in that position," Tallet said. "No disrespect to Brett Gardner: He's the guy we don't walk in that lineup. It's inexcusable."

Alex Rios had a tying single in the fourth. Wells, dropped to No. 6 in the starting batting order for the first time since June 3, 2005, hit a long homer to left in the sixth on an 0-2 pitch to pull the Blue Jays to 3-2. He entered in a 2-for-19 slide.

"If I want to get back to the position I'm used to hitting, I've got to do a better job," Wells said.

NOTES: Cano had gone 12 straight games without an RBI since June 17. ... Yankees C Jorge Posada rested his sore left thumb for the second straight day. He was hit by a foul ball Wednesday night. ... Teixeira has gone 68 at-bats without a home run since June 12. ... Scott Rolen singled to extend his hitting streak to a career-high 20 games. ... LF David Dellucci, brought up from the minors before the game, went 0 for 2 with a walk and a hit batter in his debut for the Blue Jays.

# Armstrong faces an immediate test in first stage of Tour de France

From B1

Tour organizers were forced to tinker with the full rider list until the last day Friday after French sports authorities ordered them to let Belgian sprint star Tom Boonen compete.

Before a French Olympics committee panel, the Quick Step speedster won his appeal of a ban handed down by Tour organizers after he tested positive for cocaine for the second time in a year.

The Tour has been bruised by three straight years of doping scandals: After the 2006 race, Floyd Landis was stripped of his title for testing positive for testosterone. The next year, leader Michael Rasmussen was sent home for lying about his whereabouts in pre-race anti-doping checks. Last year, six riders were caught doping, including Bernhard Kohl, the third-place finisher and King of the Mountains winner.

Doping scandals hit Astana

especially hard. In 2006, the team was prevented from riding because of a scandal on the eve of the race. The next year, it was thrown out in mid-race for another, prompting Tour organizers not to invite it at all in 2008.

Armstrong has repeatedly said he never used banned substances during his seven straight titles from 1999 to 2005, years after a dramatic comeback from his fight against testicular cancer.

Armstrong has been reunited with Johan Bruyneel, who was also his team manager during his Tour victories. Bruyneel says Contador is the man to beat, and has anointed the 26-year-old Spaniard as leader of the Astana squad.

Contador finished 31st in his first Tour in 2005, which was Armstrong's last. Contador has since won all three tours of France, Italy and Spain, one of only five riders to do so.