

## Halcovitch's home run and Sersta's CG lead 15U Titans to CPBL doubleheader sweep of Oakville Royals

The 15U Titans swept a doubleheader from the Oakville Royals in CPBL action at St. Andrew's College on Sunday.

Third baseman Nick Halcovitch delivered the game-winning RBI in Game 1 with a solo homer in the sixth inning as the Titans edged the Royals 2-1.

In Game 2, Titans starter Matteo Sersta threw a complete game two-hitter in a 7-0 win over Oakville. Titans Acting Head Coach Josh Gosselin made all the right moves with his pitching staff over the 14 innings of play on Sunday and explained the sweep's importance to his US-bound team.

"These were must-win games and we were able to dig deep and find a way today. Good pitching and defense set the tone for us. We had timely hitting that will create the kind of momentum we need to take with us to the US for our first two tournaments in Long Island and Maryland."

The lid-lifter on Sunday morning featured an old-fashioned pitchers' duel between Titans' starter Matthew McDonald and Royals' starter Eesh Sahi. Both hurlers starred for their teams on the final weekend of the CPBL regular season.

The Titans manufactured a run at the bottom of the third to take a 1-0 lead by stringing together a base hit, a steal, a bunt, and a timely RBI from Liam Dupuis-Cundy to plate Eric Gregato.

McDonald and Sahi traded scoreless innings until the sixth. The visitors from Oakville finally got to McDonald after he had thrown 5 1/3 innings of shutout baseball to provide the Titans with a much-needed quality start. Royals Dean Calitri tied the game 1-1 with a sharp knock up the middle to score Jayden Thompson and chase McDonald.

Titans' reliever Will Spencer was summoned from the pen by Coach Gosselin and induced a tailor-made double-play ball that his infield could only turn into a fielders' choice-forceout; however, Spencer took matters into his own hands and struck out Isaac Alcaine to end the Royals' revolt.

The big K by Spencer set the stage for the decisive play of the game. Nick Halcovitch strode to the plate at the bottom of the inning and delivered a lead-off, go-ahead, game-winning, line-drive home run that looped around the left-field foul pole.

Halcovitch, who also had a double and drew a walk in the opening game, explained his hitting strategy during the climactic at-bat: "The Royals reliever had just entered the game. He missed with his first pitch to me and I anticipated a fastball down the middle so he could get back into the zone. I guessed right. The home run shot actually went off the end of my bat and it just curled around the foul pole and over the fence."

Halcovitch's heroics put the Titans up 2-1, a lead they would not relinquish due to a relief pitching tandem that produced a hold and a save at the top of the seventh. Will Spencer struck out the first Royals batter he faced and induced a flyout to centerfield to record two quick outs. However, the Royals rallied by drawing two consecutive walks, impelling Coach Gosselin to go to his closer Mark Gregato.

The 6'3" reliever induced a game-ending flyball to his twin brother outfielder Eric Gregato to end the game and earn the save. The witty reliever referred to the play as a "twin killing"--an accurate and reasonable remark given the cast of characters involved in the game's resolution.

In Game 2 of the doubleheader, Titans' starter Matteo Sersta went the distance in a 7-0 win over Oakville. The big right-hander, who has been battling injuries all season-- struck out 5 Royals, scattered 2 hits, and acknowledged that he "Felt great throughout the

game.?

I needed to have a good start to help pick up the team because we've been struggling lately. I had great defense behind me, especially the big double play in the sixth to finish the inning. Moncada made three nice ground ball outs in a row in the 1-2-3 third inning, too. It was great to win both games today before we go play in the USA.?

Titans' second baseman Caiden Moncada also provided Sersta with timely offence as he drove a hard shot to centerfield that gave the Titans a 1-0 first inning lead. The Titans plated four runs at the bottom of the second inning to give their starter some breathing room on the bump.

Myles ?Ironman? Hazen?catching his fourth consecutive game of the weekend?led off the inning with a solid single and crossed the plate when Will Spencer delivered an RBI single to give the Titans a 2-0 lead.

Outfielder Alex Strapko hit a ringing RBI double to score Spencer to increase the Titans' lead to three. Moncada delivered again as he has done all season for the 15U squad with his second RBI of the game, plating Strapko to give the Titans a commanding 5-0 lead after two innings of play.

Sersta did not squander the offensive gifts from his teammates. The Titans' starter induced three consecutive 4-3 groundouts, courtesy of the right side of his infield?second baseman Moncada and first baseman James Colella-- in a very efficient 1-2-3 top of the third. After Sersta shut down the Royals at the top of the fourth and fifth by pitching to contact and keeping his defense on their toes, Moncada laced a one-out double at the bottom of the fifth, advanced to third on Sersta's single, and scored on a wild pitch to put the Titans up 6-0.

After Sersta shut out the Royals for a sixth successive inning, the Titans' steady shortstop Adam Visram led off the inning by being hit by a pitch. The speedy infielder stole second, advanced to third on a wild pitch, and Colella collected an RBI groundout to plate Visram to establish the seven-run margin of victory.

Sersta finished what he started at the top of the seventh. His final inning of work featured a KL, FO7, and a KS to punctuate his complete game victory.

**By Jim Stewart**