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## Lafayette Little League Team Bows Out in Section 1 Championship Game

*By Karl Buscheck*

There will be no repeat for the Lafayette Little League 12-and-under team. The squad's impressive summer run came to an end on July 23, as Lafayette lost to Petaluma Valley 13-0 in the Section 1 All-Star Championship Tournament title game in Alameda.

"Repeating is always a lot harder," Manager Jim Huchingson said after his team missed out on the opportunity to defend its 2014 Northern California Divisional crown. That accomplishment marked the first time in Lafayette's history that one of its teams had advanced that far in the Little League playoffs.

"Last year, no one really knew who we were-no one was watching out for us. So, we got to sneak up on people," Huchingson said. "This year, we get everyone's best pitcher. Everyone is waiting to take us down."

Lafayette arrived in the Section 1 championship clash by topping Napa 9-1 on July 19 and edging past Mill Valley 4-3 on July 21.

Huchingson couldn't point to one particular factor when asked to explain how his teams have managed to rack up so many wins over the past couple of summers.

"I don't know if there's any one key to our success out here. I think it's trying to keep everyone on board," Huchingson said. "It's hard trying to keep all 13 kids going for the whole summer. I think one of the bigger challenges is just to keep everyone moving in the same direction and believing that we can continue to win games."

John Kalil, one of Lafayette's star pitchers, explained that the key to success is the ability of the players to strike the proper balance between work and fun.

"There's definitely a lot of talent on this team, but just the fact that we can stay loose and joke around keeps people from getting nervous and tensing up," Kalil said.

Jason Vorhauer Jr., the club's catcher, agreed with that assessment: "[We try to] kind of stay healthy and be serious, but at the same time, just have fun."

Even when he's not playing, Vorhauer Jr. has been spending plenty of time hanging around the diamond this summer. Vorhauer Jr. has been working as a coach for the Lafayette Challenger team, which is part of a Little League program that gives players with physical and mental challenges an opportunity to participate in the sport.

"It's been humbling," Vorhauer Jr. said of the experience. "It helps me realize that what I have is very lucky."

Vorhauer Jr. was introduced to the program by a friend's brother, and he has found working with the Challenger players to be a natural fit.

"I just felt like it was a cool idea," Vorhauer Jr. said. "They're great kids and I'm glad they came and played baseball."

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