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St. Bernard's captured the NCS Class B baseball title on Saturday after routing Tomales 10-1 at the Eureka Babe Ruth Field. Submitted photo by Sharon Falk-Carlson

Crusade complete

by Bryan DeMain, 6/2/2007

While the expectations were high and the pressure was probably higher, the play and confidence of St. Bernard's superseded both as they went on to win the Class B North Coast Section baseball title on Saturday.

As they've done all season, the Crusaders used a combination of outstanding pitching and timely hitting to defeat No. 2 Tomales 10-1 in front of a packed house at the Eureka Babe Ruth Field.

St. Bernard's head coach Dale Del Grande summed it all up by finally revealing some thoughts he normally wouldn't.

"My greatest fear as a coach, would be to play us," he said. "I'm so proud of these guys. I knew we had a good team, we just had to come out and deliver tonight."

Delivering was no problem.

St. Bernard's pitcher Andrew Ayers struck out nine batters, including the entire side in the fifth inning, and allowed only five hits to record the complete-game win.

It was the initial spark by the bottom of the order that got things going for the Crusaders.

Eli Adams drilled a triple to right field and teammate Josh Black drove him home on a double to right-center in the second inning to put the Crusaders up by one.

Adams went 1-for-1 with an RBI, while Black finished 1-for-3 with an RBI.

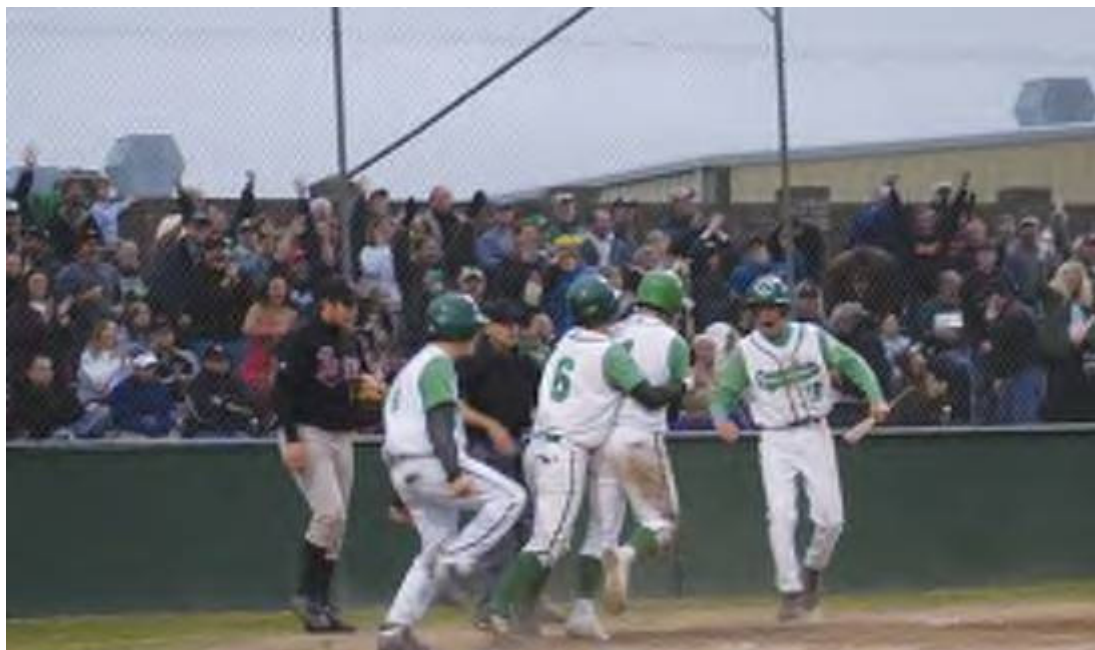
The Crusaders scored a couple more runs in the fourth after Josh Geneviro roped a two-out two-RBI double.

Geneviro went 1-for-3 with three RBIs, while teammates Vince Ayala and Mike Dominick each went 2-for-4 on the night.

But it was the bat of Mark Melendy that put the nail in Tomales' coffin after he drilled a ball that went sailing over the left fielder's head.

Melendy went on to round the bases to record an unofficial inside-the-park home run in what was a long fifth inning for the Braves.

"We couldn't have done it without every single one of these guys," Ayala said. "This is pretty sweet."



St. Bernard's celebrates an inside-the-park home run during the NCS Class B baseball championship on Saturday.
Bryan DeMain/The Eureka Reporter