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Prep Baseball

Judge gets pair of victories

By Andrew Aragon

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Judge Memorial is not the unknown, upstart baseball team it was in the state tournament last year. But so far, the results are the same.

The top-ranked Bulldogs advanced to the Class 3-A winners' bracket semifinals by beating Hurricane 8-0 in the first round, and Emery 12-2 in five innings in the second round Saturday. Judge will play Dixie, the team that beat it in the state title game last year, at Utah Valley State on Thursday.

Joe Pond played a key role in both of the Bulldogs' victories. He tossed a two-hitter against Hurricane, not allowing the Tigers to reach second base. Against Emery, he went 4-for-4 with an RBI.

He said his team is adjusting to its newfound baseball-power status just fine.

"It doesn't feel like we have to fight from behind as much as last year," Pond said. "Instead of coming in hoping to win, we're expecting to win."

Judge coach Jeff Myaer likes for his team to have that confidence. And although he knew the Bulldogs would have to beat two quality opponents Saturday, he said they worked too hard all year to squander their home-field advantage at St. Ann's.

"We're right where we think we should be," he said. "You get in that losers' bracket and it's just a nightmare. We live to see another day."

No one expected Judge to make it as far as it did in the postseason last year, when it won the winners' bracket final and only had to win once on the final day of the tournament to claim the 3-A championship. This time, the Bulldogs are considered one of the favorites after winning the Region 10 championship.

The Bulldogs started slowly against Emery in their second-round game. AJ Carman didn't have his best stuff on the mound but managed to get outs when he needed them. He helped himself at the plate with two doubles and two RBIs.

Tyson Moll had three RBIs and Stephen Stahl drove in two runs against the Spartans. Judge played great defense in both games, with outfielders Matt Thorne and Keenyn Walker making some outstanding plays.

Emery reached the second-round game against Judge by beating Logan, 3-2. Ryan Draper had the game-winning hit, which was a three-run home run in the seventh.

Judge wins two

* Judge advanced to the winners' bracket semifinals, where it will play Dixie.

* Joe Pond tossed a two-hitter in the Bulldogs' first-round game, and goes 4-for-4 in their second-round game.