

Upland Overpowers Crowley in Opening Game Win

West Zone Champion Upland, California's defeated South Zone Champion Crowley, Louisiana Friday in the Colt World Series' opening game 9-3.

Crowley got back-to-back singles from Hunter Wriborg and Beau Louviere, and Wriborg was brought home on a two-out single from Landon Lafleur, giving the Cajuns an early 1-0 lead in the bottom of the second.

Upland responded immediately in the top of the third when, after the first two batters were retired, Juan Garza was hit by a pitch. Garza stole second and advanced to third when the throw from Jon Thibodeaux was wild. Michael Santana singled to right, bringing home Garza and tying the game at one. Christian Serna followed with a single of his own, bringing home Santana. Serna advanced to second on the throw, and then advanced to third when Joshua Sosa grounded to second, but Nicholas Zeman was unable to hang on to the ball and both runners were called safe.

Robert Lopez Jr. and Jairemy Pulido drew back-to-back walks to load the bases. Alfred Castaneda followed with a single to center, scoring Sosa and Lopez, who was able to cross the plate when Castille was unable to field to throw in from the outfield.

Emilio Mata flew out to center to end the inning, but the damage had been done and Upland held a 5-1 lead going into the bottom half of the inning.

Crowley was able to generate some response in bottom of the third, when Wyatt Verrett drove a double down the line in left. Jacob Bernard laid down a sacrifice bunt, advancing Verrett to third, and Verrett scored on a fielder's choice on Nicholas Zeman's ground ball to second.

Zema came around to score when Austyn Benoit hit a grounder to short and Michael Santana couldn't hang on, making the score 5-3. Hunter Wriborg fouled out to right fielder Colby Manning, and Benoit was gunned down by catcher Robert Lopez Jr. when trying to steal second, ending the inning.

Upland got off to a good start in the top of the fourth when Manning drew a walk, followed by Juan Garza's single to left. Santana grounded into a fielder's choice, giving Upland runners at second and third with one out. Christian Serna singled to left, scoring Manning, and advancing Garza to third. Joshua Sosa walked to load the bases, but an attempted squeeze play was snuffed out as Robert Lopez's bunt was fielded by Castille and flipped to home for the out. Jairemy Pulido was struck out looking, and Upland headed to the bottom of the fourth with a 6-3 lead.

Upland was able to add to its lead yet again in the top of the fifth, as Emilio Mata lined a one-out single to center and then proceeded to steal second. Colby Manning grounded to third, but Garza followed with a single to left, which scored Mata from second, giving Upland a 7-3 lead.

After Michael Santana flew out to left to start the top of the sixth, Christian Serna reached first on an error by the shortstop Landon Lafleur. Sosa laid down a

beauty of a bunt down the third base line, giving Upland runners at second and third with one out. Both runners moved up a base on a balk from reliever Kameron Aucoin.

Robert Lopez grounded into a fielder's choice, which brought in Serna, making to score 8-3 in favor of Upland. Pulido followed with a single to center, scoring Sosa and running the tally to 9-3. Alfred Castaneda then hit a blooper to shallow right field, but it dropped in after Austyn Benoit tried to make a diving play and the ball squeezed out of his glove.

Mata flew out to right to end the inning, but Crowley headed to the bottom half of the frame needing a massive comeback.

After Sosa retired the side in order in the bottom of the sixth, Crowley managed to make a late threat in the bottom of the seventh. Jacob Bernard came up with two outs and smashed a double off the wall in right, but Nicholas Zeman grounded out to second, ending the game and giving Joshua Sosa the complete game victory 9-3.

With the win, Upland advances to play in Game #11 Sunday at 4 p.m. ET/US. Crowley plays its next game tomorrow at 11:00 a.m. in Game #6, an elimination game. Continue to follow all of the action on PONY.org and ColtWorldSeries.com.