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Santa Barbara Makes it Back to Back at NBC

WICHITA, Kan. - The Santa Barbara Foresters won their fourth National Baseball Congress World Series title as a testimony to their tenacity, grit and determination, defeating the Seattle (WA) Studs 6-2 in the championship game Aug. 12.

The championship, along with the 2011 title, enabled the Foresters to be the first team to win back-to-back titles since Kenai's (AK) double in 1993 and 1994.

John Beck struck out 10 and allowed one unearned run over 6.2 innings to earn the win, while three relievers (Willie Kuhl, Albert Minnis and Jason Hursh) preserved it.

Five players (Arby Fields, Richy Pedroza, Austin Davidson, Shane Hoelscher and Zach Fish) each scored a run and drove in for Santa Barbara (7-1). The Foresters scored three times in the second inning on singles by Davidson, Hoelscher and Fields to take the lead for good. Fish, who went 3-for-4, homered to lead off the fifth and was also named the NBCWS MVP.

Seattle (6-2), which made its third appearance in the past five years, never recovered after starter David Benson was knocked out in the second. Benson had entered the game with a 2-0 record and allowing no runs in 16 innings, but departed with the loss and finished with a 1.53 ERA. Brady Steiger was the lone bright spot for the Studs, going 3-for-4 with two doubles and a run scored.

The Studs and Foresters met for the title in 2008, with Santa Barbara prevailing 2-0.

The championship game completed a tournament that saw the pitchers dominate play to an extent not seen since the NBCWS returned to using only wood bats in 2000. The tournament finished with an ERA of 2.78 and saw 18 of the 32 teams finish with an ERA of 3.00 or below. Tournament batting finished with a wood-era low of .234 and saw only one team (Tulsa (OK) Cardinals, which went 0-2 despite a .316 team average) bat above .300. Home runs were also at an all-time low, with just 13 hit in the 63 games (surpassing the previous low of 15 hit in 2001 and 2011).

National Baseball Congress