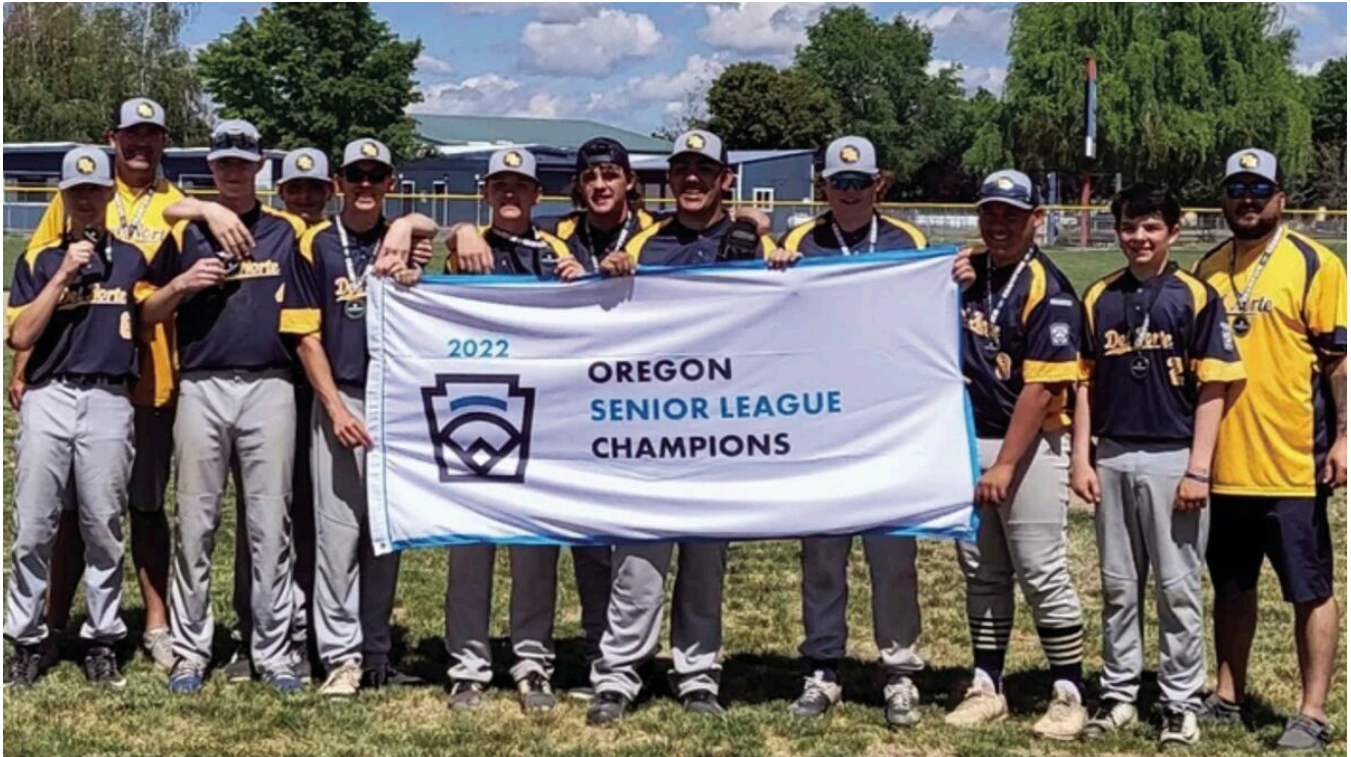


Del Norte All-Stars qualify for 2022 Western Region Tournament

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The Del Norte Senior Little League All-Stars will carry plenty of momentum into this year's Western Region Tournament, as they look to secure a place in the 2022 Senior Little League World Series.

The tournament kicks off in Oakland on Thursday and features 10 state champions from throughout the Western United States, with just one team advancing.

But after recently impressing on their way to the Oregon State title, the local all-stars are looking forward to the occasion and won't back down from the challenge.

"I hope we can go down there and be as competitive as we can be," coach Jon Nelson said. "And hopefully take home another banner."

If the team's offense and pitching continue to play as effectively as they did on their way to the Oregon championship, they should be a difficult proposition for any opponent.

The Del Norte players won two of their three games against OreCal in the championship series, rallying from an opening loss to win two straight elimination games.

After dropping their opener 17-15, they dominated on their way to 18-2 and 22-3 victories.

The Del Norte bats scored a very impressive 55 runs over their three games, while the pitching and defense effectively shut down their opponents' offense over the final two games.

"We've got some exceptional pitchers," Nelson said. "They're throwing the ball really well and they're able to locate it. We're getting a lot of strikeouts."

Sylas Sampels has been the team ace so far and will be expected to play a key role in the Western Region Tournament.

"He's our go-to guy," Nelson said.

The versatile Anthony Cardenas also has been pivotal to the team's success, playing catcher, shortstop and pitcher, as well as providing a big bat in the lineup.

"He was pretty outstanding," Nelson said. "He was on base 80 percent of the time the whole tournament."

Cardenas also had a home run, as did teammate Zephyr Hussey, while William Nelson provided a consistent bat and hit four doubles in the championship series.

The team defense also has shown some improvement the more the Del Norte all-stars play together.

"Defensively, we've been focusing on the fundamentals, and they're getting there," the coach said.

Brothers Ben and Jake Shrewsberry both also play catcher and pitcher, with Jake also playing some outfield, while the talented Saxton Taylor plays pitcher and shortstop.

Mason Borges also pitches and plays first base, while Donovan Hintz plays some first base and in the outfield.

Rounding out a talented roster are pitcher, catcher and third baseman Greyson Franklin and outfielder Landon Tissue.

The team features 14- to 16-year-olds and, according to the coach, it's a tight-knit group that is coming together at an opportune time.

"They really click together," Nelson said. "They get along. They're all friends outside of baseball so they've got a good chemistry."

It's also a group of players that were eager to return to competition this summer.

"After the whole COVID, nobody had played much, so these kids were chomping at the bit to play," Nelson said. "It's been fun. They've been working hard."

Their enthusiasm and hard work have paid off so far and the Del Norte boys will be hoping that continues at the prestigious region tournament.

The local all-stars have a bye on the opening day and will begin play against the SoCal champs on Friday at 2 p.m. at Laney College, one of two sites for the tournament, along with the College of Alameda.

The tournament will run for six days, with the championship team flying out to South Carolina for the World Series the following day.

Mathew Shrewsberry also coaches the team.

A GoFundme Page has been set up to help offset the costs of traveling for the tournament.

The GoFundMe can be found through this link: <https://gf.me/v/c/rdjg/dn-senior-little-league-heading-to-regionals>