

FRANKLIN 7, TAUNTON 4

With big hits early, No. 1 Franklin rolls against No. 4 Taunton in rematch of last year's Division 1 baseball state final

By **Ryan Martin** Globe Correspondent, Updated May 12, 2023, 10:59 p.m.

FRANKLIN — The previous two matchups between Franklin and Taunton, including the Division 1 state baseball final last June, were one-run nail-biters.

But under the lights Friday night, top-ranked Franklin strung together six consecutive hits in the second inning — hitters No. 7 through No. 3 in the lineup — on the way to a 7-4 Hockomock League victory over No. 4 Taunton

Senior Ethan Depaolo started the six-run outburst with a single to left, No. 8 hitter Luke Sidwell legged out on an infield single, and classmate Ryan Carlucci delivered an RBI double. Ryan Gerety, the leadoff hitter, followed with two-run double for a 3-0 cushion. Three batters later, the lead was 6-0 on two singles and a sacrifice fly.

“Our guys have done a great job second time through the lineup.” Franklin coach Zach Brown said, “The bottom part of our order is relentless, they turned the lineup over and got us going.”

“All year, we’ve been able to limit damage,” Taunton coach Blair Bourque said, “We left a couple balls over [the plate], and we paid the price.”

In the top of the third, Taunton (11-4) got a spark when senior Dawson Bryce sent a two-out pitch from Franklin’s Alfred Mucciarone over the left-field wall, scoring teammates Andrew Cali and Baden Sullivan for a 6-3 game.

Mucciarone rallied to toss Franklin's second complete game in as many chances. The UMass-Lowell commit finished allowing four hits, one walk, and 10 strikeouts .

Added Brown, "These guys overwhelm the strike zone and attack . . . they give themselves chances to be in the game and able to finish it off."

"Mucciarone's the best pitcher in the state for a reason," Bourque said.

After dropping the state final, 2-1, Franklin has now swept both games this spring.

"The mind-set is that we're not done," Mucciarone said, "Definitely, definitely not done."