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# Little League: Riley hurls Portsmouth past Rye

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Rye outfielder Dave Muse comes up with the catch during Friday's District II Little League All-Star game at Jenness Field in Rye.

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**RYE** — Rich Riley is not the typical size of most 12-year old kids standing at over 6-feet tall.

Add a pitching mound underneath his feet and a target only 45 feet away, the right-hander for the Portsmouth Little League 11-and-12 year old All-Star team becomes an imposing figure.

Riley gave Portsmouth a great start to its District II season by striking out a career-high 17 batters in Portsmouth's 10-0 win over Rye in the round-robin opener for both teams at Jenness Field. Riley allowed two hits and walked two. Rye's only out that didn't come via a strikeout was on Logan Adams' groundout in the second.

"My arm felt good and I just tried to plow through the innings," Riley said. "When I started warming up today, I felt pretty good."

Portsmouth (1-0) had 11 hits off four Rye pitchers. Cole Gendron had two hits and two RBIs, while Sam Grobe had two hits.

"We were a little slow coming out offensively, and that was one of my concerns, would we have enough power at the plate," Portsmouth coach Tim Berky said. "This year we should have more timely hitting and line drives. I was pleased with the overall game plan today."

Portsmouth scored three runs in the first without a hit. Jake Becker and Mikel Toar each reached on an error and a walk to Loden Formichelli loaded the bases. Riley followed with a liner that went in-and-out of the glove of shortstop Carter King, who threw to catcher Xavier Quinn for the forceout. Quinn's throw to first in an attempt to complete a double play sailed into right field and Toar and Formichelli scored for a 2-0 Portsmouth lead.

Lucas Hartmann drove in Riley on a groundout for Portsmouth's third run.

"The boys had some jitters, they were on their heels," Rye coach Ron King said. "In the field we made some errors. Most of them weren't difficult plays. They were plays we could, and should make easily. If we would've made those plays, we could've held them to at least four runs."

Rye's Carter Madden held Portsmouth to one hit entering the third when the Portsmouth's bats exploded for five runs on six hits. Connor Monahan and Eddie Ferrini led off with hits and Monahan scored on Charlie LeHoux's sacrifice fly. Gendron followed with an RBI single, Grobe singled and Becker walked.

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Toar ripped a two-run double off the center-field fence and Justis Mattis followed with an RBI infield single and Portsmouth led 8-0.

"No matter how many times I do this, I come out with butterflies, the kids come out with butterflies, so everybody is nervous so it takes a couple of innings," Berky said. "I just told them that lets get in the groove defensively and let the offense come whenever it can. If it comes early, that's great, but if not, we keep building and building. The kids were patient and looking and waiting for their pitch."

Riley held Rye hitless through the first 3 1/3 innings until Owen Shepcaro reached on an infield single. Charlie Kendall had Rye's other hit in the sixth. Ron King was impressed with what he saw out of the Portsmouth hurler.

"The kid is huge, what do you do?" Ron King said. "It's so close and the ball is coming in so fast. I was still proud of my boys. They stood in and took their swings."

Berky said that while Riley may not pile up this many strikeouts every time out, it was still a typical outing for him. And it was an outing Berky hopes sets the tone for the rest of the tournament.

"That was an average game for him, not in terms of strikeouts, but for him pitching wise he's going to be around the plate," Berky said. "He's an imposing figure, he's standing in at 6-foot-3 and change. For a 12-year old, when they see the first fastball, I'm sure that gives them something to think about."

Rye (0-1) continues round-robin play today at Somersworth, while Portsmouth will host Dover Monday.



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