

The Volcanoes extended the lead to 3-1 in the top of the fifth thanks to an RBI-single from Landen Barns, but the Campesinos responded in a big way in the bottom half of the frame.

With one on and one out, Campesinos outfielder Joseph Nunn Jr. stepped to the plate in a big spot — Nunn Jr. replaced Campesinos top hitter Rick Phillips in the third inning after Phillips was injured colliding into the center field fence while making a play on a deep fly ball.

But Nunn Jr. proved he was up to the task, lining a double into left field that was just out of reach of Volcanoes left fielder Nick DiBenedetto. After a sacrifice fly by Colin Runge and an RBI-single from Trevor Morrison tied the game at 3-3, Volcanoes manager Tony Torcato replaced his left-handed starter Evan Brisentine in favor of Matt McDonald.

The Campesinos would take their first lead of the game later in the frame on an error by Volcanoes shortstop Kevin Jordan Jr.

Pitching with the lead for the first time in the game, Nealy came back to the mound with a different level of swagger and mowed through the Volcanoes lineup in the sixth inning.

“I just wanted to do everything I could to keep the score the same and leave it to the bullpen to take care of the last few innings. At that point it’s a mentality switch,” Nealy said.

“Underneath the long hair, slender body and quiet demeanor is a dog. When he gets punched in the mouth, he is looking for the next opening to punch back. He knew it was his game. He had been waiting for this moment all year,” Robertson added.

In the bottom of the sixth, the Campesinos got some extra insurance runs for their bullpen, courtesy of Chung, their star second baseman.

After falling behind in the count, Chung tattooed a moonshot over the right field wall that nearly reached the Interstate-5 freeway as the Campesinos increased their lead to 7-3.

“I got a little bit too big with the first two swings. I was trying to hit a sac fly, but with two strikes, you just look to put a good swing on it and hit something to the middle of the field. Fortunately, I ended up doing a little bit more than that,” Chung said.

The Campesinos increased their advantage to 9-3 in the bottom of the seventh on a pair of unearned runs, but the Volcanoes threatened to do some damage in the top of the eighth after loading the bases.

Nick Adgar brought in a run with an RBI-walk to make the score 9-4, which brought up Volcanoes first baseman Bryan Ruby.

Ruby hit a scorching ground ball up the middle that initially appeared like it was going to score two runs, but Chung, who shifted to behind second base during the at-bat, was positioned perfectly to field the ball and stomp on the bag for the force-out.

With a five-run cushion, the Campesinos set the table in the bottom of the ninth for their closer Luke Laurita, the league leader in saves. Despite giving up an RBI-hit, Laurita earned the game-ending punch-out and was mobbed by his teammates on the mound.

The celebration lasted long after the final out was recorded and was full of hugs, photos with friends and family and champagne showers. For Campesinos players,

it was more than about winning a championship, it was about returning to the sport they love after nearly a two-year hiatus.

“It has been so much more than I could have asked for. Just to be able to get back into the game and have the success that I had was very big for my confidence and served as a reminder that I can still go out and compete. I had a lot of fun too. That was the big part for me,” Nealy said.

“This summer has meant everything, one of the best summers of all time. I’d be remiss not to thank the Mavericks League and everyone who put this on. Last year, all of us were sitting home, searching for a chance to play and they gave us that opportunity. To be out here playing with this special group of guys has meant the world,” Chung added.



Joseph Nunn Jr. slides safely into third base.

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