

Aurora Jays end week at top of NDBL standings



By Jake Courtepatte

The Aurora Jays baseball club saw a three-place swing in the North Dufferin Baseball League standings this week, now sitting in the top spot after facing two of the top teams in the Ivy Leafs and Bolton Brewers.

The team entered the week sitting in third place, three points back of the first place Brewers.

Things kicked off with a game at home against the Leafs on Tuesday. The home side never faltered, as the Jays' bats were on fire all evening, winning the game handily 9 ? 1.

The Jays picked up thirteen hits on the night, including three runs by Ian Rettie on a 3-for-4 night.

Andrew Bukovec had a solid performance on the mound, going 5.2 innings, allowing only three hits and one run, striking out four.

The team then traveled to Bolton on Thursday to face their next toughest opponent in the Brewers. After Tuesday's win, the Jays sat one point up on Bolton for first place in the standings.

Having outscored the opponent 22 ? 1 over the last two games, the Jays bats were silenced by an excellent outing on the mound by Brewers pitcher Zack Ridell.

After taking an early 1 ? 0 lead in the top of the first off a Ted Beadle RBI, the Jays could not produce in the second inning. Ridell struck out the side.

Down 2 ? 1 after two innings, the Jays defensive play looked to spark some life into the team when right-fielder Jake Pinnegar made a stretched-out grab on a deep fly ball to rob the Brewers of an extra run.

The Jays then tied the game in the third inning, when a one-out single brought in Chris Bloom who had hit a hard line drive double to get in scoring position. They would take the lead 3 ? 2 in the top of the fifth when Ian Rettie would cash in his second run of the game.

However, the Jays ran into trouble in the bottom of the inning when starting pitcher Chris Rettie walked the Bolton batter to load the bases with only one out. Rettie then gave up singles to the next two batters, putting the Jays behind for good, 4 ? 3.

The Jays' frustration was evident in the top of the sixth, when Dan Lehmkuhl hit a hard line drive to third base. Brewer third-baseman Travis Rumney made a diving stab to block the ball, and Lehmkuhl was called out after a hard throw to first base.

The Jays dugout was irate, but understanding of the nature of making close calls.

“It was disappointing,” said Lehmkuhl. “It would have been nice to continue, we would have been back to the top of the order. But sometimes that's just how it goes.”

Lehmkuhl said although the loss knocked the Jays out of first place in the NDBL, the team has to focus on the future.

“It's a tough loss, but we tried our best like we always do. We've just got to look at getting to the top.”

The Jays were able to bounce back, as a win against the Lisle Astros Friday evening put Aurora back at the top of the standings. As of Monday, the Jays sit one point up on the Brewers and Leafs with four games to play.

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