

Jays continue their 'red hot' streak



By Jeff Doner

The Aurora Blue Jays have continued their red hot pace with dominant wins over the Midland Indians and Mansfield Cubs this week, improving their winning streak to eight games.

Pitcher Brent Owen had six strikeouts, a no-hitter going into the fifth inning and pitched a complete game 9 ? 1 win over Midland last Tuesday and said the Jays seem to have production coming from all areas mid-way through the season.

'I am feeling pretty good, the arm is nice and loose and I'm always feeling ready to go,' he said.

'We've been hitting the hell out of the ball, pitching well, defence is tight and everything seems to be working right at the moment.'

Countering on the mound for Midland was pitcher Tim Coburn, who was roughed up by the Jays bats and was also tagged for a few throwing errors that led to runs for Aurora.

By the bottom of the fourth inning the Jays built themselves a comfortable 7 ? 0 lead, with Ian Gabel connecting for his second home run of the season ? his first was against Lisle last week.

'It's going pretty good,' said Gabel post game. 'It feels good to win the games and also to hit a couple homeruns.'

In the top of the fifth, Midland quashed Owen's bid for a no-hitter, connecting for their lone run of the game on a double by Tyler Hayes.

The Jays would add two more runs on the bottom of the sixth to make it 9 ? 1, while Owens closed out his fifth win of the season with a beauty strikeout.

'We look pretty good, I think we have a good shot at winning it all this year ? we won the OBA's [provincial championships] last year, so I think we can win that again,' said Gabel. 'Confidence is running high and we're at a lighter part of the schedule right now, so we should be able to run the table, but it will start to get tougher as we get closer to the playoffs.'

Mansfield Cubs

The Jays were right back to it on Wednesday night, pounding the Mansfield Cubs 9 ? 2 on the road.

The win keeps their winning streak alive and on pace with New Lowell, Ivy and Orillia for second place in the North Dufferin

Baseball League senior standings.

Ian Milne got the win on the mound for the Jays and once again the bats powered Aurora to their eighth straight win.

Nathan Drury, Chris Fafalios, Ted Beadle and Ryan Lewis went deep for the Jays, giving them an incredible four home runs in the game.

Michael Keon also contributed on both offense and defense, going two for four at the plate and making a highlight reel snag in left field.

Keon said the Jays are chugging along nicely at an important time of the season.

"The biggest difference right now for us is the offence ? we're just hitting consistently," he explained. "We've scored at least seven runs in the last seven games that we have won, so if you're scoring that many it's tough to lose. You can disguise some mistakes, whether it be pitching mistakes or defensive mistakes if you're scoring a lot of runs. That's probably the biggest difference between the first few games of the year and the last seven."

He also praised a couple of his teammates and said confidence is at an all-time high for the reigning OBA champs.

"One of our all-stars, Stephen Valley, he has continued to just hit and Chris Bloom, who had missed a few games, has an average in the .600 range, he came up with a couple more hits tonight too."

"The confidence is definitely sky high and that's not just confidence in yourself, but you've got confidence in all your teammates. It's always a good feeling that even if you get down a few runs, you've got such a deep lineup and can easily come back. I think with baseball being such a mental game, it's a big aspect of it."

However, the real test is still to come, as the Jays move ahead into a tougher stretch in the schedule where they will face opponents that are either ahead or chasing them in the standings.

"With the rain-outs it has kind of been a little scarce, so we've got two or three games a week for the next little while, so it will be a pretty good test," said Keon. "We close the season with games against some of the top teams, so this middle stretch is important for us just to play well and put ourselves in a good position for home field in the playoffs."

Home games for the Jays take place on Tuesday nights at Lambert Willson Park. This week they will try to keep their winning streak alive against the Bolton Dodgers (Wednesday) and Nobleton Cornhuskers (Saturday), both on the road.

For schedules, stats and more on the North Dufferin Baseball League, visit www.ndbl.ca