

Jays eliminated from North Dufferin playoff contention

By Jake Courtepatte

A perennial contender in the North Dufferin Baseball League will be sitting out of this year's postseason.

The Aurora Jays fell just short of a playoff position in the 2018 AA season, bowing out just a few points shy of the eighth and final spot.

With the losses piling up in July, the Jays entered Thursday's contest with the Orangeville Giants at Lambert Willson Park with losses in five of their last seven, sliding down the NDBL ladder.

Ian Milne went the distance on the mound, giving up just ten hits and five runs through all seven innings of work, though it was a sixth inning double that drove in the winning run for Orangeville in a 5 ? 4 loss.

Aaron Giroux, Ted Beadle, Stephan Vallee, and Brad Crosby all crossed the plate for the Jays.

Facing the perennial powerhouse New Lowell Knights for the first time this season on Saturday, Crosby and the Jays surprised last year's runners-up by handing them only their fourth loss of the season, a 9 ? 5 score thanks to an explosive second inning.

Veteran Daniel Lehmkuhl returned to the lineup for the first time this season, cashing in a run on four at-bats, while Ian Rettie's monster three-run home run capped off a seven-run second.

Rettie, who added a solo late in the game, was also returning on a one-game stint, two years removed from a league MVP title with the Jays.

Crosby picked up his second win of the year as the starter, giving up eight hits and two walks through all seven innings.

Monday's rematch with New Lowell on the road was forfeited by the Jays.

A rebuilding season for the Aurora club, their record of 8-15-2 falls quite short of their 21-6-2 record in 2017, a team manager Rob Wilson said is "one of the best (we've) ever fielded."

Losing a number of starters to higher-tier advantages, including Lehmkuhl to the Newmarket Hawks of the AAA Greater Toronto Baseball League, proved costly for this year's crop of less-experienced Jays.

The Ivy Leafs finish the season as the regular season champions, allowing just one loss over their 26-game schedule, followed by the 21-4-1 New Lowell Knights.

Last year's Strother Cup champions, the Bolton Brewers, head to the playoffs with a 19-4-3 record good for third position.

Playoff schedules will be released following a league meeting after press time on Wednesday.

For stats, schedules, and more information, visit www.ndbl.ca.