

Aurora Jays are ready for playoffs after successful run



By Jeff Doner

The Aurora Blue Jays are primed and ready for the playoffs after another successful season in the North Dufferin Baseball League.

The Jays finished the season on a respectable run, losing only once in their last seven games.

The loss came against the league leading Bolton Brewers last week, where the Jays were forced to swallow a 1 ? 0 defeat. ?They are the best team right now, so we kind of looked forward to it,? said Blue Jay Mike Keon.

?But the game against the Brewers certainly did lack the intensity of Bolton/Aurora matchups of the past. Bolton played a modified squad, didn't have a lot of guys in and threw a bunch of different pitchers.?

Making the loss sting a little more was the fact that the Brewers scored the only run of the game in the bottom of the first inning. Aurora pitcher Ian Milne was charged with the loss, but pitched a masterful game for his team.

In fact, pitchers Milne, Brett Owen and Ian Rettie have been stalwarts on the mound for the Jays as of late.

?We've had great pitching,? said Keon. ?In the last five games we've only given up 10 runs. That's perfect because we've always had a really good hitting team and at the start of the season our pitching was lacking a bit and to see it come around now is great.? Blue Jays catcher Rob Wilson said it was a tough loss to take.

?Any time we don't get a win is a disappointment, but a 1 ? 0 loss to a strong Bolton club bodes well for us. They do everything well, so to keep them to one run says our pitching and defence was solid,? he said.

?Obviously you can't win a game without scoring a run, but we hit a few balls hard, just couldn't string it together.? As things currently stand, the Jays will face the Clearview Orioles in the first round of the playoffs. The Jays split their season series with Clearview 1 ? 1.

With the regular season behind them, Wilson feels his team is primed for another strong run at the Strother Cup. ?We approached last week as a tune-up for the playoffs and for the most part I was happy with the result,? he said. Keon added that team's confidence seems to be high as the playoffs approach.

?I think we're pretty confident going in. Even if you're the one or two seed [Aurora is third] you're going to get a tough series, so Clearview we certainly think we can win, but they kind of spanked us at the start of the year, but we got them back here at the end of

the season.

?They're one of those teams that seems to pitch and play defence pretty well, so we'll have to match them on that front and just hope that we can get a few runs across and come out on the right side of it. We expect to, and have the goal of making the finals and once you're there hopefully you can have a good series, but you've got to win to get there.?

Playoffs will likely start on Tuesday, Aug. 6 with Clearview visiting the Blue Jays at Lambert Willson Park.