

Aurora's Adam Khan and the UBC Thunderbirds advance to the 2025 NAIA World Series in Idaho



Aurora resident Adam Khan will be finishing his four-year career at UBC on a very high note this week. On Tuesday, Khan and his Thunderbird teammates will embark on a nine-hour bus trip from Vancouver to Lewiston, Idaho, in quest of a NAIA baseball championship.

Khan has been a mainstay for UBC's bullpen in his senior year and helped the mighty Thunderbirds capture the Hattiesburg Bracket to qualify for the World Series.

"Being on the mound in our last regular season game in Lewiston and to win our game against LC State to win our conference was a personal highlight of the season so far. As a relief pitcher, there are always ups and downs, but I've been able to command all three of my pitches down the stretch. I got called on to pitch in the conference-clinching game and threw two scoreless innings. My fastball has been topping out at 90-92 and all my pitches have been working in the playoffs."

Khan's Thunderbirds qualified for the NAIA World Series for the first time since 2006, but UBC's 2025 season did not start in a promising manner.

"Our results weren't as good as had hoped for in Florida, but we continued to improve as the season progressed. Our success during weekend series included a lot of sweeps and we also won three of four games on many of the weekends to create momentum. We created so much buzz for a playoff series at home and I realized at that point that this could be a special season. I really enjoyed pitching in the playoffs in Mississippi—it was great weather and reminded me of pitching in York Region in the summer."

The fourth-year reliever acknowledged that the time has flown as a student-athlete at the Vancouver-based university.

"They've been the fastest four years of my life and it's surreal that it's almost over. A special part of my final season is that my family and my girlfriend have been able to see me pitch this Spring. The fact that we're going to the World Series hasn't set in yet. We're the first team from UBC to qualify for the World Series since 2006. To be one of the Top Ten teams to qualify for the World Series out of 220 teams in the NAIA is an achievement for UBC."

Khan described the Thunderbirds' first opponent at the NAIA championship and some factors in UBC's favor.

"Our first game is May 23 against #2-seed Georgia Gwinnett College from Lawrenceville. We're the #9 seed and anything can happen in an opening game. We're just trying to stay in the moment. We know the ballpark in Lewiston, Idaho, really well so we'll

enjoy our bus ride on Tuesday to a place we're really familiar with. Lewiston has hosted the NAIA World Series for 40 years. Baseball is their thing in Lewiston and it's a great baseball city. Our coaches are doing a great job to prepare us for a double elimination national tournament in familiar surroundings.?

Despite this familiarity, there is also a sense of finality setting in for the veteran Thunderbird as he contemplates the big games ahead this week and reflects on four outstanding years at UBC.

?Thirteen guys graduate from the program this year, including three starting pitchers. This is a veteran team and I'm so grateful to do this with this great group of guys.?

Upon his return to Ontario in early-June, Khan will be suiting up with another great group of guys on another championship-calibre team when he rejoins the reigning IBL champion Barrie Baycats.

?Josh Matlow?our owner, GM, and Manager?is so super-congratulatory and supportive of his College players. I've recommitted with him for the 2025 season. I'm looking forward to being able to be with the Baycats deep in the playoffs since I won't be going back to school in the Fall and will be with the team full-time right through September. I had such a great time with the guys last season on a championship team.?

Aurora's Adam Khan is in a unique situation with a chance to win a National Championship with the high-powered UBC Thunderbirds this Spring, enjoy spot starts and bullpen appearances for Barrie this Summer, and vie for a second consecutive IBL championship ring with the Baycats this Fall.

To paraphrase the title of Robert Bolt's famous play, Khan's four-year, cross-continental baseball trek has made him ?a pitcher for all seasons.?

By Jim Stewart