

## Hot-hitting Toronto Mets turn SAC into Father's Day firing range with 11-0 and 6-0 Wins over 18U Titans



In the Canadian Premier Baseball League, sometimes you're the hammer and sometimes you're the nail.

In a display of powerful hitting and brilliant pitching on Sunday afternoon at St. Andrew's College, the 18U Toronto Mets hammered the hometown Titans Baseball Club 11-0 and 6-0 to sweep the CPBL doubleheader.

Toronto hit the ball hard and often on their way to a pair of convincing six-inning victories.

Even the Mets' outs were loud throughout the afternoon.

Titans' centerfielder Tarek Emara?a Saint Xavier University Cougars commit?and Titans' second baseman Justin Fenn?a Houghton University Highlanders commit?played excellent defence in both games at their respective positions or the deficit would have been measured in touchdowns. Emara and Fenn took away many Mets' hits and combined to make over a dozen putouts in twelve innings as a dynamic defending duo.

Remarkably, the Mets and Titans were deadlocked in a 0-0 tie after two innings of play in Game 1 as starting pitchers Giacomo Quinn of the Mets and Eric Lanoue of the Titans moved methodically through opposing hitters. However, the visitors from Toronto opened the top of the third inning with five consecutive singles by Dylan Bonzon, Jonah Miranda, Liam MacPhie, Parker MacLean, and Nate King to jump out to a 4-0 lead. 8 Mets batted against Lanoue in the third in what turned out to be the decisive inning.

Mets Head Coach Jalen Harris inserted fireballing middle relief pitcher RJ James to shut down the Titans at the bottom of the frame and he struck out the side to protect his team's newfound 4-0 margin.

James's performance sparked the Mets' bats at the top of the fourth as Callan Leroux blasted a lead-off home run to stake Toronto to a 5-0 lead. After the Titans stranded Emara at third at the bottom of the inning, the Mets plated four more runs with BJ Peart's solo home run greeting Titans relief pitcher Mike Kennedy rather rudely.

Matt Van Slyke and Ben Silverman followed with a sharp single and double, respectively; Bonzon slugged a sac fly, and Miranda's ringing double plated two more runs to increase the visitors' lead to 9-0. Toronto delivered the knock-out punch at the top of the

sixth when Peart slammed a double off the top of the centre field fence and Silverman hit a two-run homer off the SAC press box on the adjacent football field to provide the eleven-run margin of victory.

Game 2 featured a battle of starting lefties as Cameron Byers took the hill for the Titans and Michael Floyd toed the rubber for the Mets. Byers? a SAC graduate who is committed to the Glenville State University Pioneers in West Virginia? hit MacLean to start the game, but induced a tailor-made double-play ground ball that was booted by normally-surehanded shortstop Nolan Thomson, a D1 commit in Illinois.

Instead of two out and nobody on, Byers had to deal with runners on first and third with nobody out. The error opened the floodgates as Peart hit a rocket off the centerfield fence to plate both unearned runs.

The unflappable Byers struck out Silverman and Van Slyke, but Titans third baseman Saunders Mireault booted a routine ground ball at third to force the Titans hurler to throw extra pitches. Byers was able to induce the Mets into an inning-ending 4-3 put out by the slick-fielding Fenn. The ?six-out inning? ramped up Byers's pitch count, but he held the hot-hitting Mets off the scoresheet into the fourth inning by striking out five of the next eight Toronto batters he faced.

However, the Titans' bats remained mostly cold on a warm June afternoon, with the exception of Owen Shepherd whose two-out double created a degree of suspense at the bottom of the third, but a deep flyout to right field by Fenn ended the uprising.

Toronto increased its lead to 4-0 on Bonzon's RBI fielder's choice and Wyatt Guy's RBI single down the third base line. The Mets expanded their lead to 6-0 at the top of the fifth as Miranda and MacPhie drew two-bases-loaded walks on very close calls at the plate versus Titans' reliever Aidan Hoffmeyer.

Despite being squeezed by the plate umpire, the lanky reliever was otherwise effective by inducing pop-outs to his corner infielders Mireault and Crowley to limit the damage.

Hoffmeyer? also a GSU Pioneers commit heading to West Virginia in September? put up a zero at the top of the sixth and struck out two Mets to keep the Titans within striking distance.

The Titans mounted their first offensive threat of the afternoon at the bottom of the fifth when Owen Shepherd drew a lead-off walk and DH Noah Gibbons blasted a shot into the center-right gap to give the Aurora-based club runners at first and third with none out.

However, the Titans squandered this golden opportunity to get back into the Father's Day contest by striking out and then grounding into an inning-ending 4-6-3 double play.

The Mets bent at times over the two games at SAC on Sunday, but their shutdown pitching and peerless defense earned them a pair of shutouts on the last Spring doubleheader of the 2023 CPBL season.

The 18U Titans suffered the most unique of baseball defeats on Saturday. Their ace Jack Ferguson? who was the winning pitcher in the Titans' 14-4 romp over the Ontario Astros at SAC last Sunday-- threw a no-hitter and the Titans hammered out eight more hits than their opponents, but they lost 3-2 to the Mets. It was that kind of weekend for the hometown 18U Titans.

**By Jim Stewart**