

Jays retain third place in league standings with eight games to go



By Jeff Doner

With two more wins against the Orangeville Giants and Angus Black Sox last week, the Aurora Jays baseball club find themselves in good position with just eight games remaining in the regular season.

As of Tuesday, the Jays own a 15 ? 1 ? 1 record, good for third place in the North Dufferin Baseball League (NDBL) standings and just three points out of first place.

The Jays started off their week with a game against a couple familiar faces on the Giants in Nate Drury and Kevin Buck, who played for the Jays last season.

However, the Jays got off to a sluggish start to say the least, surrendering four runs to the Giants in the top of the first inning, with NDBL All-Star MVP Andrew Bukovec on the mound.

But Bukovec and the Jays buckled down, scoring one run in the third inning and keeping the Giants from creating any more offence.

The Jays then got the bats going in the fifth inning, led by a triple from Chris Bloom, who was brought home on a sacrifice fly by Jake Pinnegar.

Dan Lehmkuhl got in on the action, reaching third base on a throwing error and then was driven in on a single by Ryan Lewis. Lewis then took advantage of a wild pitch and scored from third base with a dramatic slide to tie things at 4 ? 4.

Catcher Fab Dolan followed up, driving in Chris Rettie to give the Jays their first lead of the game.

Ian Rettie closed out the game with two strikeouts to deny the Giants a comeback in a bases-loaded situation to ensure a 5 ? 4 victory.

The Jays had a few days off before heading back to Stewart Burnett Park for a game against the Angus Black Sox on Monday night.

The Jays went hard at Angus early, tagging their starting pitcher with six runs in the first inning alone.

Ian Milne pitched a solid game for the Jays and his team backed him up with more run support on route to a 12 ? 1 win.

Missing a chunk of their starting lineup, Chris Rettie said it was encouraging to see the team step up to play roles they aren't used to.

?Tonight we were missing two of our shortstops, so it's pretty nice that we have somebody like Ryan Lewis that can step in there and do a fantastic job tonight,? he said. ?With our makeshift defense there tonight we still only allowed one run.?

The Jays manufactured their runs with 13 hits, mostly timely singles up the middle, while the pitching staff limited the Black Sox to two hits.

The Jays have a big week ahead of them, getting right back at it on Tuesday night at Stewart Burnett Park against New Lowell, then traveling to Clearview on Wednesday before returning Lambert Willson Park for a Sunday matinee against the Mansfield Cubs.

Looking ahead, Chris Rettie said confidence continues to run high up and down the lineup heading into the final stretch of the regular season.

?We feel like every game we go into, no matter who shows, who is on the mound, we feel like we're going to win the game,? he said. ?We've just got to show up and each individual do their job and we can get the job done.?

For schedules, standings and stats, visit www.ndbl.ca