

Jays strong after weak season open



By Jeff Doner

The Aurora Blue Jays had a busy, yet very successful week on the diamond, defeating Mansfield, Lisle and Angus helping them string together a nice four game winning streak and improving their season record to 7 ? 3.

Their recent run erases a small skid the team was experiencing near the start of the season.

?We started off the season really well; we beat New Lowell and Bolton, who were both finalists last year. Bolton actually was just ranked seventh or eighth in the province, so to give them their only loss this year is kind of nice ? a little bit of a feather in our caps,? said Jays player/coach Rob Wilson after Tuesday night's 10 ? 0 win against Mansfield.

?We've also let a few slip away early that we probably should have won, but we're kind of making the most of it. After Sunday our bats came alive and we were able to put a few runs up tonight and it looks like we've turned a bit of a corner and I fully expect for us to go on a bit of a run here.?

On Saturday, Angus came out strong, but Jays starting pitcher, Chris Leslie, settled in after the first inning and Zach Wiseman came in to shut the door en route to a 14 ? 4 win.

The Lisle Astros pushed back a little harder on Friday night, but the Jays bats continued to run hot in a 10 ? 6 slugfest. Ian Gabel and Chris Fafalios hit home runs for the Jays to power the offence right along.

Earlier in the week, the Jays hosted the Mansfield Cubs at Lambert Wilson Park and saw their bats come alive in a dominating 10 ? 0 win.

Jays starting pitcher Ian Milne got the win and Zach Wiseman closed the door for the Jays in the sixth. Milne and Wiseman allowed no runs and only gave up a combined three hits and one walk.

?Our pitching has been pretty good,? said Wilson. ?We've picked up a couple new arms and the numbers may not necessarily reflect it, but our pitchers have been doing a good job of giving us a chance every night. Our bats are starting to come around and really I think the story so far this year is our new guys are really contributing.?

The new players are another aspect of this year's Jays that Wilson said has been a great surprise, as the team has added some formidable pieces to help them retain their status as provincial champs.

‘They’ve really kind of rounded out our roster,’ Wilson explained. ‘It makes my job and Mike Keon’s job that much easier as coaches to be able to go two, three, four guys deep at some positions. The new guys have really fit in and the top guys are doing their jobs well.’

Chris Fafalios is a new player for the Jays and is currently on scholarship in the US playing baseball. Wilson said he has stepped in and filled a hole at the catching position.

Kevin Buck, who came over from Orangeville after that team folded after last season, is another one of those new players who has stepped in nicely.

‘It has been pretty good so far,’ he can’t complain. The guys have been pretty accepting to having us on the team and they’re pretty good guys to play ball and hang out with,’ he said. ‘We got off to a slow start and our bats weren’t really clicking, but the last four or five games now we’ve really started to turn on the bats, so that’s been a big key to our victories lately.’

Chris Bloom has also been a shining spot on the infield for the Jays this season. Wilson praised the shortstop’s play post game on Tuesday night.

‘I think the highlight for us would have been our infield defense,’ up the middle especially. ‘[Chris] Bloom was really good at shortstop. He’s got real good hands and was putting on a show for us tonight. When the ball goes in his direction we can usually breathe pretty easy.’