

## Mayor's Breakfast of Champions Spotlight: Aurora King Baseball Association



It was Labour Day Weekend 2015, and like many baseball teams across the province, the Aurora King Jays Rookie AA team was in Brantford to compete in the OBAs.

The four-day tournament included thirteen Rookie AA teams from across Ontario, including Aurora-King, Newmarket and Barrie from the York Simcoe Baseball Association.

After winning three straight games, Aurora faced off against Oakville on Saturday afternoon. At that point in the double-elimination tournament, Aurora and Oakville were the only two teams still undefeated. Beating Oakville in that fourth game earned Aurora a bye in the next round (Sunday morning) moving directly to Sunday afternoon.

Aurora met Waterloo in Game 5 (which ended up being the semi-final). The game was tight with Aurora starting strong and Waterloo rallying later in the game to come back to within one run with a final score of 6-5 for Aurora.

That brought Aurora to the Monday morning game versus the hometown Brantford Red Sox, a team they had faced earlier in the tournament. Brantford came on strong both defensively and offensively in the first inning closing out the first with a score 5-0 for Brantford.

Aurora rallied in the 2nd inning getting the maximum of seven runs in the second inning and holding Brantford at 5 (7-5 for Aurora, end of second).

The teams played fairly evenly in the middle innings, wrapping up the fifth inning with a score of 13-9. After another strong inning in the sixth for Aurora, and with a score of 19-11 at the end of the sixth inning (and with a seven-run per inning rule), the game was called with Aurora winning the game, tournament and title.

This team really was created through the hard work and dedication of Kevin McNeil (supported by others). In 2014, Kevin put together Aurora King's first (or at least first in a long time) Minor Rookie Rep team.

The Aurora King Baseball Association (AKBA) was not sure about it and wouldn't approve it unless there was a strong turnout for tryouts and that the level of skill would make the team at least competitive. Well, the team was put together and the next year they won the AA OBA's.

The core of this team is also on the roster for 2017 and are now playing at AAA level, the highest level available.

Since that time the Minor Rookie and Rookie rep teams are solid in the AKBA, much of it as a result of Kevin's drive in 2014.

This all has played a tremendous part in strengthening baseball in Aurora and contributing to much future success.