

North Dufferin Baseball League releases 2016 schedule

By Jake Courtepatte

The boys of summer are back on ball diamonds around the York and Dufferin regions in early May, with the North Dufferin Baseball League (NDBL) announcing its schedule.

Among them will be the Aurora Jays, looking to put their 'always the bridesmaid' status behind them. Despite being a perennially-successful team, the Jays are still looking for their first senior NDBL title. They came within striking distance in 2014, losing the championship series in six games to the Ivy Leafs.

Last year, a 19-7-0 record had the Jays second in the league after the regular season. They met the seventh-place Orangeville Giants in the first round of the postseason, and were stunned in a quick four-game series loss.

The Jays will be back at Lambert Willson Park on Industrial Parkway North for their home games this season, the first of which comes on May 10, hosting the Barrie Angels. Before then, they will have to contend with the Clearview Orioles on the road May 8.

Rob Wilson returns as player/bench boss for the Jays, with Ian Rettie also picking up managerial duties for the season. Rettie dominated the NDBL offensively in 2015, leading the league in a handful of batting categories, and will be looking to repeat those efforts this year.

Most of the team's core will also be returning for this season.

At a recent league meeting, executive membership approved the 2016 26-game schedule for the 14 senior teams, and an 18-game schedule for the four-team junior division.

The junior division includes almost a complete overhaul from the 2015 season, with only the Ivy Rangers remaining. Teams from Mansfield and New Lowell will join the league, while Midland returns from a one-year absence. Aurora will not field a team in junior this season, after taking the championship last year.

The senior division includes the Alliston Athletics, who competed at the junior level for the past three years, as well as the Aurora Jays, Barrie Angels, Bolton Dodgers, Clearview Orioles, Creemore Barons, Creemore Braves, Ivy Leafs, Lisle Astros, Mansfield Cubs, Midland Indians, New Lowell Knights, Nobleton Cornhuskers and Orangeville Giants.

The Angus Black Sox folded this year and are taking a one-year leave of absence.

Other events in the season are the tournament hosted by Lisle on the Victoria Day weekend, the New Lowell tournament on the Civic Holiday weekend, and the annual All-Star game on July 9 hosted in Lisle.

For full schedules, visit www.ndbl.ca.