

## Rookie Jays are provincial champs



**By Jake Courtepatte**

The Aurora King Rookie Jays took their game to the highest provincial level over the weekend and came out the victors after dominating the competition.

It was a 'larger than life' atmosphere for the eight and nine-year olds in Brantford facing off on the diamond against the top teams from across Ontario in the Ontario Baseball Association championship. The grueling four-day tournament kicked off on Friday, when the Jays quickly established themselves as a top contender for the provincial crown.

An early morning slugfest against Burlington had Aurora on top 18 ? 12 before they disposed of Mississauga South in the afternoon by a score of 12 ? 3. On Saturday, they moved to a 3 ? 0 record by defeating the hometown Brantford squad 11 ? 7.

They faced their biggest challenger later that day in Oakville, the only other team to remain undefeated so far. Squeaking by on a 14 ? 13 victory, the Jays earned themselves a bye into the semi-final round late Sunday afternoon.

Following a light practice and inspired after watching their namesake Toronto Blue Jays in the hotel lobby, they took to the field against Waterloo and put up two runs in the first inning. Two more in the second had the Jays up 4 ? 1 after two.

After a couple of scoreless innings, both teams crossed the plate in the fifth as the Jays headed to the sixth inning with a comfortable 6 - 2 lead.

Waterloo rallied in the bottom of the sixth to make it 6 ? 4, and after shutting down the Jays' offence in the seventh and deciding inning, brought the score to within one. However, Aurora's defense held on the take their fifth-straight win by a score of 6 - 5.

The win vaulted the Jays into the championship game, a rematch against the hometown Brantford Red Sox. It seemed like a different opponent in the first inning, as Brantford jumped out to an early 5 ? 0 lead.

Aurora responded by maxing out their number of runs in the second at seven. They scored at least one run per inning from there on in, including six in the sixth inning, mercy-ruling the game after that inning to win the championship 19 ? 11.

'It was hot and the fields were hard and dusty, making for unpredictable ball bounces throughout the weekend,' said Patti Mikula, a parent on the team. 'But the Jays adjusted their play and powered through to get their championship rings.'

'It was an awesome weekend and some amazing ball was played.'

The team put up a record of 11-8-0 over the regular season in the York-Simcoe Baseball Association, good for fourth in the AA division.