

Senior Jays eliminated from NDBL playoffs



By **Jake Courtepatte**

The Aurora Jays were sent packing on Sunday by one of the most dominant teams in the North Dufferin Baseball League in years.

Following a 5 ? 5 tie to open the series early in the week, the New Lowell Knights took control of the best-of-five semifinal series to earn their spot in the championship in four games.

Inclement weather caused a number of delays in the schedule, causing the series to return to New Lowell on Thursday. There, the Knights took an 8 ? 2 win. In the only home game for the Jays in the series, at Stewart Burnett Park on Friday, New Lowell took a close one 6 ? 4.

Sunday's finale in New Lowell was never close, with New Lowell clinching the series by a score of 13 ? 0.

Aurora entered the semifinal series after a quick three-game sweep of the Midland Indians, an upset of the third-place team by sixth-place.

Despite their position as a perennial powerhouse, often the best offensive team throughout the regular season, the Jays are still in search of their first Strother Cup in its history. They last came within striking distance in 2014, losing the championship series to the Ivy Leafs in four games.

Four of the top ten batting averages in 2016 were Jays, including reigning league MVP Ian Rettie, who put up an outstanding .478 to go along with 32 hits in 21 games. Brad Crosby and Daniel Lehmkuhl also batted higher than .400.

Aurora finished the regular season with a record of 14-11-1.

New Lowell, meanwhile, has emerged in the last couple of years to become the top contender in the AA league, taking over from the Bolton Brewers, now in the AAA Greater Toronto Baseball League.

Winning last year's Strother Cup title, the Knights were regular season champions in 2016, playing to a record of 21-4-1.

The town of New Lowell also claimed the junior title in the league last week, beating the Mansfield Cubs in four games of a best-of-five series.

Meanwhile, the semifinals of the senior division continues, with the Knights waiting on the outcome of the Ivy Leafs vs. Orangeville Giants series. After Orangeville went up two games to none, Ivy stormed back to win and tie the next two games. Game five goes later this week.

The championship series is set to begin this Saturday.

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