

U15 Aurora Diggers qualify for Tier 1 Canadian Fast Pitch championships in New Brunswick



U15 Aurora Diggers Head Coach Pat Donevan scanned his team's dynamic warmup in left field at Town Park on Thursday night and offered a succinct summation of their magical season: 'It's been fun.'

Indeed, the Diggers were having fun on the diamond, and they've been winning very big ball games in late-June and early-July.

Two recent wins in Windsor and Aurora qualified them for the U15 Women's Canadian Fast Pitch Championships in Fredericton, New Brunswick from July 28 to August 2.

In his seventh season coaching the Diggers, Coach Donevan described the qualities of his national championship-calibre club: 'They're super hard-working?you can see they're here early for practice. The way they've gelled is great to see?nobody sulks if they're not starting and they're at the fence cheering on their teammates during the games. There's a cohesive feeling which is very satisfying. It's fun to watch them be them.'

One of the reasons for the team's cohesiveness is that their veteran dugout boss has moved up divisional age groups with the current squad and has provided continuity and connection: 'We've retained our core. Ten players have been with us for four years. [Catcher] Avery [Wilson] joined us last season as an important addition to the team. You can see her commitment?showing up an hour early for practice and getting in extra work with her dad.'

The combination of cohesion and talent contributed mightily to Diggers' recent victories in Windsor and Aurora.

'We won our first game on our side of the draw versus London. It was a big win that qualified us for the Nationals. We were rained out in our next game and had to reschedule. We ended up hosting Halton in front of a big crowd at Town Park. Scoty Lewis?our ace?pitched a one-hitter. She lost her perfect game on a bloop single, but we stayed in control and won 8-0. She's also had some big hits for us. In our two qualifying games in Windsor, Scoty hit three homers: two against Stratford and one against London. They didn't pitch to her after that. The win over Halton gave us the #1 seed in New Brunswick.'

Coach Donevan pointed to timely performances by his ballclub in Quebec, prior to the National playdowns, as significant highlights: 'In the Quebec tournament semifinals, we went into the 7th tied 0-0 versus the top team from New Brunswick. Scoty was pitching a shutout, but our D made great plays behind her when New Brunswick had two on and nobody out and we got out of it. Zoe Clark made a big catch in right field and made a great throw to third to hold the runner from advancing. Zoe ended up scoring the winning run at the bottom of the seventh and we won 1-0. I looked out at them celebrating and thought 'These girls know what they're doing.' The semi-final walkoff created momentum into the Finals. We beat a club from the US?the Massachusetts Warriors?7-0.'

After Coach Donevan delineated his team's timely victories in Quebec, he described the perfect little diamond in the heart of Aurora where the Diggers play home games: "It's such a cool set up here. I wished we played more games here. We practiced here the other night when the bands were playing concerts in the Park. The coaches and the girls were singing to The Spoons. There's great energy here around the neighbourhood. People walk by the diamond and drop in to watch the game. You don't get that experience at the parks on edges of towns where there's no walk up crowd or houses surrounding the park?they're just too far out of the way."

As much as Coach Donevan praised his home diamond, playing at Town Park has been a comparative rarity and the U15 Diggers have had to be road warriors to play Tier 1 games in 2026.

There has been a price to pay for such success and it will continue as the team faces enormous travel costs to compete at the Nationals. The veteran Diggers coach explained the club's solution: "We're fundraising to help defray the big costs incurred by families to accommodate our players for six to seven nights. New Brunswick hotels this time of year are expensive. Our fundraising is going well so far through GoFundMe. The response from the community has been incredible and we appreciate it. So far, we've raised almost \$11,000 of our \$13,000 target. We'll have two call-ups to augment our roster so we need to help those two families cover their travel costs, too?and we have to supply them with a Diggers uniform for the Nationals."

If you'd like to support this superb softball team in their quest for a national championship, go to www.gofundme.com/f/help-send-the-aurora-diggers-u15-softball-team-to-nationals and make a donation to help the U15 Aurora Diggers come home with a Canadian title.

By Jim Stewart