

SPORTS & LEISURE

Rag-tag Eagles earn shot at national crown

EAMONN MAHER
Staff Writer

Although not exactly the *Bad News Bears*, the rag-tag California Little League baseball team portrayed in the 1976 movie starring Walter Matthau, Georgetown's peewee boys' Eagles at first glance don't appear to be national championship material.

Many of the team's players, including several from Halton Hills, took up the sport only a couple of years ago, yet they were able to win all six games at last weekend's Ontario qualifying tournament in Whitby, knocking off some large centres along the way.

The Eagles, who are 58-2 overall in 2007, will now travel to Quebec City on Wednesday for Baseball Canada's under-13 boys' championships, making them the first Georgetown Baseball Association team to reach that stage.

"When we started with this team last year, about seven of the kids hadn't played organized baseball before. Some of them didn't even know there was a Canadian championship," said head coach Bill Byckowski, Canadian scouting director for the Toronto Blue Jays from 1993-2003.

"It's quite a mix of kids, and a lot of them have come a long way to get to this point. Just to represent Ontario is amazing because those tournaments are brutally tough to win. The amount of pressure on the kids in Whitby was incredible."

Byckowski, who has been in Quebec City this week scouting the Canada Cup tournament for the Cincinnati Reds, was permitted to add three players from other top Ontario teams to bolster the pitching and catching depth. Among the 10 other participating teams are Red Deer, Alta., Abbotsford, B.C., Winnipeg, St. John, N.B., Mount Pearl, Nfld., Summerside, P.E.I. and Saskatoon.



Ontario's representatives for Baseball Canada's national peewee championships next week in Quebec City will be the Georgetown Eagles after they swept through the provincial qualifier in Whitby last weekend. Team members (front, from left) are: Jonathan Palumbo, Tom Byckowski. Second row: Brad Bedford, Kaleb Leff, Michael Courvoisier, Kyle Hann, Scott Garvie, Mark Jankowski. Third row: Anthony Marra, Luke Sinclair, Adam Anderson, Adam Hoover. Back row: Assistant coaches Jayson Corrigan, Bob Elliott and head coach Bill Byckowski. Absent was assistant coach Jim Ridley.

A scan of the team rosters reveals that one of the host Quebec City 13-year-olds is listed at 5-foot-10, 225 pounds.

"You can count on B.C. and Quebec as being contenders because they're strong at all age groups, but it'll be hard to tell how good teams really are until we get there," Byckowski added. "Teams are able to load up for the nationals and you're pretty much going to see most of each province's best

players."

The peewee Eagles will practise three times this weekend in Georgetown before leaving for La Belle Province. The pitching staff went 6-0 and at the 17-team Ontario qualifier, headed up by Luke Sinclair, Brad Bedford, lefty Adam Anderson and Kyle Hann.

At the plate, Tom Byckowski went 8-for-17 with two RBIs and he also earned a save.

Anderson drove in seven runs and was 2-0 on the mound, while Sinclair tossed 11 scoreless innings, won three games, saved two more, struck out 24 batters and walked just one.

Bedford didn't allow an earned run through eight innings and went 7-for-16 with four RBIs.

Also on the Georgetown coaching staff are Burlington's Jim Ridley, a scout for the Minnesota Twins, and Bob Elliott, longtime baseball columnist for the Toronto Sun. Assistant Jayson Corrigan played shortstop for Byckowski in 1993 on the Brampton bantam squad that captured a national championship.

For updates on the tournament, which begins next Thursday, visit the website www.baseball.ca.

Following are highlights of the Eagles' journey to victory at last weekend's Baseball Ontario 2007 Peewee Eliminations in Whitby:

Georgetown 2, Vaughan Vikings 1: Anderson (GWRBI double); Hann (winning run); Sinclair (W).

Georgetown 10, Scarborough Stingers 3: Jonathan Palumbo (2 hits, 2 RBIs); Hann (2 hits, 3 RBIs); Anthony Marra, Bedford (2 hits, RBI); Anderson (W, 7Ks); Byckowski (2 hits, S).

Georgetown 7, Markham Mariners 0: Bedford (W, 4 inns.); Palumbo (2RBI double); Mark Jankowski (RBI single); Sinclair (S).

Georgetown 5, Mississauga Majors 4: Kaleb Leff (2 SBs, GW run in 7th); Anderson (2 doubles, 4 RBIs); Sinclair (W).

Georgetown 10, London Badgers 8: Bedford (3RBI HR); Sinclair (W); Anderson (GW 2RBI single in 7th); Byckowski (2RBI single).

Championship game— Georgetown 3, Mississauga Majors 1: Anderson (W, 5Ks, 6 inns.); Sinclair (S, 2RBIs); Bedford (2 runs).

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Future looks bright for young lacrosse ace Lyons

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Peterborough's Trent University is hosting the International Federation of Women's Lacrosse Association under-19 championships this week and a 14-year-old Georgetown resident figures to be one of Canada's star players when the tournament rolls around again in four years.

Casey Lyons doesn't play for the red and white just yet, but her impressive offensive talents were on display for one of the two Ontario teams entered this week in a

13-team under-17 girls festival-type event held in conjunction with the under-19 world field championships in Peterborough.

Lyons netted several points through her Team Ontario #1's eight games this week from her attacking midfield position. Individual statistics weren't kept at the festival as the main focus was to generate exposure for the sport, although Ontario #1 had a good showing, winning its final three games to end up with a 4-3 record.

Lyons has been a force for the Brampton under-19 squad as well, finishing up as the third-leading scorer in the 14-team Ontario Women's League.

"I played on boys' teams all my life until last year I

started with the girls with Ontario and my Brampton rep team and I won't go back," said the Centennial Middle School graduate, who's entering Grade 9 at Georgetown District High School.

"I used to play box lacrosse too but I really like field better."

Lyons likely wouldn't have had time to participate in any other sports anyway as her commitment to the Brampton under-19s and Team Ontario has meant for a busy spring and summer. She's been to a couple of tournaments in New York and the prestigious All-Star Express event in Baltimore, Maryland.

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