

Sports

GWBA Cubs win league playoffs

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Submitted: July 11, 2006 12:53 PM CT Getting from a good idea to a successful outcome isn't always the easiest road to follow. Detours and delays are routinely encountered. It wasn't so for one local baseball team this season.

The Woodstock Cubs won the whole enchilada in their inaugural season, finishing 32-1-1 including a four-game sweep in the league tournament. "We had a great season," said Cubs manager Scott Kunzie.

The Greater Woodstock Baseball Association was formed this past winter as an overarching organization to offer the most options for youth baseball players in Woodstock. GWBA created three new teams this year, the 11 and under Woodstock Lightning and the Woodstock Cubs and White Sox of the Nippersink League.

That all of these teams proved to be competitive isn't really a surprise, that's what the GWBA hoped for when it was formed. But the Cubs taking first place in the Nippersink League tournament July 2 was more than anyone would have predicted before the season.

The Cubs, a top ranked team going into the tournament, got great pitching in the title game. Scott Rausch and Derrick Roemisch combined for the 9-3 win by giving up three earned runs on nine hits and seven strikeouts while surrendering only two walks.

"Both pitchers had excellent control considering the pressure of a championship game," Kunzie said. The two hurlers kept their pitches down and didn't give up any big hits deep or in the gap, Kunzie said. The team was a little shaky at the start, allowing two of the three Cobra runs in the first frame. The Cubs rallied and tied the game before a five-run fifth inning put the Cubs firmly in control.

Cobra runners only attempted three steals on catcher John Drennen, known to have a cannon to second base. "They scouted us in the semifinal game and knew they could not run on us with John firing down to second," Kunzie said. The Cubs catcher has one of the strongest arms Kunzie has seen at this level of baseball.

Kunzie said that the threat of Drennen's arm and the pitchers' control kept the game close for the Woodstock nine long enough for the bats to get warmed up. The offense was sparked by five players, Kunzie said. Marshal Happ, Logan Kunzie, Blake Johnson, Daniel Howe and Matt McGinley all went 2 for 3 at the plate after hitting successfully all season.

The Cubs outscored their opponents 289 to 69 in the regular season, Kunzie said.

The Woodstock White Sox also were quite successful in the regular season finishing with 24-3-2 record before the tournament. The Sox won their first tournament game against the Lake Villa Teal 6-0 on a complete game by hurler Mike Kremske. The young pitcher allowed only three hits and two walks with eight strikeouts. No Teal runner advanced past second base and Kremske faced only two batters over the minimum 21 in the shutout victory. The Sox used small ball to plate their first run in the first frame and the big bats woke up in the third when Pat Mertz drove home Kremske and Tony DiMaio with a double. Colton Davis drove in Ryan Miller in the inning as well.

The White Sox season ended in a heartbreaking extra inning loss to the Lake Villa Purple in the second round of the tournament. The Sox only managed to plate one of six base runners in the first two innings. Pat Mertz scored on a double off the bat of Tyler Creath.

The Pale Hose led 1-0 until the bottom of the third when scored three runs on six hits. It remained tight and the Sox found themselves trailing 3-1 in the top of the sixth before plating two for the knot. The Lake Villa nine threatened with base runners in the sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth but failed to score. They loaded the bases in the bottom of the 10th inning but the Sox held the tie while only managing one base runner.

The two teams went back and forth with strong pitching and key defensive plays until the 11th when the Purple squad loaded the bases and drove in the winning run.

"The White Sox really helped us by taking them into extra innings," Kunzie said. "We played (the Lake Villa Purple) in our semifinal game."

The Woodstock Cubs beat an exhausted Lake Villa squad 9-3 in the semifinals.

Kunzie said that the Cubs would like to extend congratulations to the White Sox on a great season of baseball.