

Bolton Brewers looking to repeat as NDBL champions



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It may be hard to believe, but baseball season is just around the corner.

With the white stuff still on the ground, Bolton's AA ball clubs have already begun training on the diamond, preparing for the 2018 North Dufferin Baseball League season.

And the Bolton Brewers will once again be looking to repeat as champs.

A strong 2017 regular season left the Brewers in second place in the NDBL, returning to the league after a two-year absence to compete in the AAA Greater Toronto Baseball League.

Facing the regular season champion New Lowell Knights in the championship series, the Brewers reclaimed the throne they have grown accustomed to in the league.

Veteran pitcher Trent Barwick was the winning pitcher in the season's final game, going five scoreless innings while allowing six runs.

Longtime player manager Mike Wallace was given the Paul Carruthers Memorial Award following the game for the postseason's most valuable player, and will be alongside Barwick as the team's top two veterans will look to repeat as champs.

The Brewers last won the Strother Cup in 2013, as well as the four years previous, before making a move to the AAA Greater Toronto Baseball League. Their return to the North Dufferin League last season saw them finish second in regular season standings, behind only the reigning champion Knights.

Wallace also filled his trophy case at last month's NDBL awards banquet, where he earned the nod as the league's top hitter in posting a .527 average, as well as best on-base percentage and the division's most valuable player.

Released last week, the schedule has the Brewers opening at home at Ted Houston Park on May 5, a 2:00 start time against the visiting Clearview Orioles.

Sharing the field with the Brewers will be the Bolton Dodgers, who missed the postseason in 2017 after a strong showing in 2016.

Manager Ronny DiPalma leads the way as action kicks off in a road game at Mansfield on May 6, before the team's home opener on May 9 hosting the Alliston Athletics.

First pitch is set for 8:30p.m.

Fourteen teams will take the field for the 2018 NDBL season, down one from 2017, with the Newmarket Cornhuskers taking an unspecified leave of absence.

The Midland Indians have also rebranded as the Midland Mariners, in a move to separate the club from the controversial 'Chief Wahoo' logo of the Cleveland Indians.