

Brewers prepare for AAA baseball in Greater Toronto

By Jake Courtepatte

With baseball season fast approaching, the Bolton Dodgers senior men's baseball team has already dusted off the mitts to prepare for the upcoming North Dufferin Baseball League (NDBL) season.

But for their in-town rivals the Brewers, they're taking their talents south this season to match up against the best in the GTA. The decision was announced early last month at the NDBL's annual general meeting, where the club was granted a one-year leave of absence to join the AAA Greater Toronto Baseball League. They will face off against the likes of East York, Leaside, Martingrove, Newmarket, Pickering and Thornhill.

Jumping to the senior AAA-level had been in the back of manager Mike Wallace's mind since last season.

"We feel like we can compete at the higher level," said Wallace. "We've got a good group of guys and we're on track to be even better."

The 2014 season was the first in five years that the Brewers failed to take home the Strother Cup as the top team in the NDBL. They were sent packing in a four-game semifinal series by the eventual champion Ivy Leafs.

"It hurt, but doesn't take away what we've accomplished in this league," said Wallace of the Brewers, who have played part-time in the GTBL for the past two seasons.

It was a disappointing finale to their AA run, marred by a grand slam late in the series after a stellar regular season that saw the Brewers fall just short of the league-leading Aurora Jays in standings.

The Bolton squad first made a splash in AAA in 2013, knocking off the eventual 2014 champion Tecumseh Thunder in game one of the AAA elimination tournament. Since then, relative success has proved that they can hold their own at the higher level.

Home games will resume Thursday nights out of North Hill Park, while the season kicks off with an away game against the Pickering Red Sox May 12.

The AA Dodgers, meanwhile, are in training to open their season in early May as well. They will be looking to rebound from a lacklustre 2014 season that saw them miss the playoffs by finishing 11th in the 14-team league, losing six of their final seven games. Opening on the road against the Creemore Barons May 3, they don't return to their home field of North Hill Park until May 21.

For the full schedule, visit www.ndbl.ca



The Bolton Brewers will be moving up to the AAA Greater Toronto Baseball League for the 2015 season.