

Dodgers preparing for first playoff appearance

By Jake Courtepatte

For the first time in their four-year history, the senior Bolton Dodgers have booked their ticket to the North Dufferin Baseball League playoffs.

"They deserve it this year," said long-time coach Mark Kellett. "They've worked hard as a team and it's good to see them finally build up to that level."

It was a narrow miss last year, earning a loss in the final week of play to miss the playoffs by four points. They ultimately ended up in 11th place.

This time around, the Dodgers are a touch over .500 and are sitting in a comfortable sixth position, though the race is tight between sixth and eight.

Pitcher Shawn English attributed a good portion of the team's success to their newfound knack for power hitting. Newcomer Colin McKeen, once manning the hot corner for the University of West Alabama Tigers, has been a large part of that success.

"He's amazing to watch," said English. "Having him in the lineup not only produces us runs, but it's also a confidence booster to the rest of the team."

McKeen had the Dodgers' only multi-base hit in their solo game last week, a 6-4 loss to the Creemore Braves. Up 4-3 in the top of the seventh inning, starting pitcher Ron DiPalma ran out of gas, allowing three straight to cross the plate before getting the yank. However, Bolton's pitchers have shown the ability to successfully pitch deep into games this season. The team has gone to only five different pitchers all year, with veterans like DiPalma, English and Tysen Hansen often going six or seven innings in a game. "We've made the right changes and figured everything out this year," said English. "We look good."