

Dodgers rally from behind to win season opener

By Jake Courtepatte

In the final game of the Bolton Dodgers' troublesome 2014 baseball season, coach Mark Kellett said some poor luck at the plate was to blame for missing the playoffs.

Now, one game into this year's incarnation of the North Dufferin Baseball League, those bats seem poised to be back on track.

The boys in grey and blue travelled north to Creemore Sunday to kick off the season, one of three games for the senior division's opening day.

With a short bench, it was the Dodgers' fielding that seemed in distress early. A few missed opportunities in the infield as well as some rusty pitching mechanics saw them down 8-2 after three innings.

"I didn't have great control pitching," said starting pitcher Shawn English.

English, a veteran of the team, proved his worth on the mound last season, pitching a complete game in his last outing against Creemore.

This time, he was never able to settle into a groove. He was pulled after 2.2 innings, allowing Shawn Hansen to see his first action of the season.

Hansen closed out the inning spotlessly, allowing another run to cross the plate in the next inning to put the Dodgers in a 9-2 hole.

It wasn't until the next inning that the bats warmed up for the Dodgers, and they warmed up in dramatic fashion.

Coach Michael Gemmiti, the team's top hitter in 2014, earned two runs in the fifth, part of a four-run inning to cut the deficit to three. The turning point in the game then came off the bat of Colin McKeen, who blasted a three-run homer in the sixth to make it 9-8.

"It seemed to spark a comeback for us," said English.

Two more runs in the sixth completed the comeback, with eight consecutive Dodger runs crossing the plate. However, they weren't out of the woods just yet.

Having hurled a solid 2.1 innings of work, Hansen struggled in the sixth, to the point of loaded bases and zero outs. Brother Tyson Hansen came to the mound in relief, getting out of the tough situation without a run, and capping off his performance with a three-up, three-down performance in the seventh for a 10-9 Bolton victory. He also had three strikeouts in the outing.

The Dodgers lost four of their final six games of the regular season last year, finishing seven points out of the playoff race.

Coach Andrew English was excited for a fresh start to the new season, adding last July the team had "a good core group of guys, but were looking for some fresh faces for that extra spark."

He may have found it in McKeen, who went three-for-four in his first outing in a Dodger uniform.

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Bolton Dodgers' Tyson Hansen begins his slide into second base as Creemore Barons' Bryce Watson receives the ball during a May 3 contest. Hansen was tagged out on the play. Photo by David Anderson (NDBL)