Tight losses end Blues' run at the AAYBA World Series championship

The South Farmington Blues 13-and-under baseball team finished seventh overall and in the Elite Eight at the 44-team American Amateur Youth Baseball Alllance World Series in St. Louis after suffering a one-run quarterinal loss. The state champion Blues placed the highest of five Wichigan teams at the AAYBA series with a 7-2 record. They endured three extra inning games, including a 13-inning win over the Northern Virginia Rush, 9-7. This World Series attracted the 10p 13-year-001 teams in the country and was won by the East Cobb (Ga). Mudcats. The tournament format separated teams into eight pools that played for seeding in the top division of 16 teams (platinum), the second 16 (gold) or last 12 (silver) for the most competitive finals possible. The Blues finished first in their pool with a 4-0 record. Playing eight games in six days (July 14-19), the Blues opened against the St. Louis Cobras, the defending AAYBA 12-year-old gold champions, with one of their best hitting games of the season. Tom Spisich was 3-60-3 while Jeff Gorecki, Stephen Doty, Brooks Thyn and Chase Dehne gut two hits each in a 14-bit effort. Josh Rebandt pitched a three-tire with from strikeouts and a walk. Rebandt also had two runs batted in in the 11-1 win, which was shortened to five innings by the norey nult.

batted in in the II-1 win, which was shortened to five linnings by the mercy rule.

On the second day, Blues cather-Jonathan Castine bit well in both ends of a doubleheader with three home runs, including two grand slams. In the first game, the Blues led the Orland Park (III) Rockhounds 4-3 when Castine added insurance runs with a homer in the top of the fifth inning. He also homered in the seventh and was 3-for-4, with six RBI in the 1-3 win. Mat Paul went the distance for the win, allowing four hits and a walk while striking out four.

In their second game, Mount Zion (III), held Castine hit less and the Blues to a 2-2 tie through seven innings. But in the top of the eighth, Castine hit an opposite-field grand slam for a 6-3 final score. Gorecki turned in a complete-game performance with 11 strikeouts, five hits and a walk.

In the contest to finish first in their pool, the Blues fall behind +1 in the bottom of the third to the Kentucky Tlans, who scored four runs on Blues' errors. In the top the sixth, the Blues narrowed the gap to 4-3 on a single by Andy Harris and an inside-the-park homer by Castine.

homer by Castine.

Paul then walked and Doty singled before Brendan Clarke delivered a two-run, go-ahead double.

The Blues gave pitcher Akhenaton Thomas four more insurance runs in the seventh for a 9-4 final score. Thomas gave up six hits and a walk while striking out four to put the Blues into the tourney's Sweet

the Blues into the tourney's Sweet Sixteen.

That set the stage for the Blue's three-hour manthon with the Rush of Virginia. Doty, the starting shortstop, got the call to pitch and was cruising with a one-hit 4-1 lead before giving up three singles in the bottom of the sixth. Rebandt came on in relief to keep it 4-3. In the bottom of the seventh, the Rush scored an uncarrned run with two outs to tie it, but on the same play second beseman Tuyn threw from the outfield grass to stop the potential winding run at home with a throw to Castine.

In the ninth, the game went to a

to Castine.

In the ninth, the game went to a tiebreaker system that puts a runner on second base with no outs to start each half inning.

The Blues and the Rush scored

a run apiece in the ninth, 10th and 11th innings to keep it tied at 7-7. When they didn't score in the

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lived at 1030 N. Adams,
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12th, the Blues intentionally walked the bases loaded with one out for the Rush. Gorecki threw home on a grounder to first, and Castine got the runner at third for a 3-2-5 double play. In the 13th, a 3-2-5 double play. In the 12th, Thyn scored on a game-winning BBI single by Deline. Paul came in to get the save, getting the three hitters on fly balls. Rebandt got the win, pitching 6 1/3 innings or cellef.

On Thursday, the Blues faced the Fort Wayne (Ind.) Indians and tied the game 3-3 in the top of the third Inning on a triple by Castine that scored Dehne. But the Blues

couldn't push in the go-ahead run after loading the bases in both the sixth and seventh innings.

In the bottom of the seventh, the Indians got a single and arror to put runners on second and third with no outs. Gorecki, who pitched an eight-hitter, so no run-scronig single in the bottom of the seventh bases and, with one out, then bases and, with one out, then in the 4-olass.

The loss forced the Blues into a walk to force in the gamewinning run in the 4-olass.

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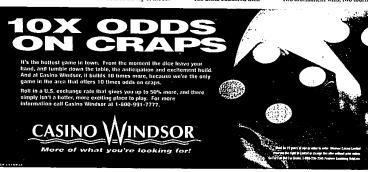
were Castine (480, 17 RB, eight runs and four homers). Debme (474, three RBI, five runs), Clarke (471, three RBI, five runs), Clarke (471, three RBI, eight runs) and Tuyn (304, three RBI, io runs).

The team's earned run average was 1.37 with Rebandt at 0.29, Gorceki at 0.91 and Thomas at 1.06. The Blues returned home with an overall record of 48-9, including the state championship,

ment seconds, runners-up in the Little Caesars Amateur Baseball Federation regular season with a 19-3 record and ranked No. 1 by USSSA for the Great Lakes Region. The Blues, managed by Rick Thyn with assistant coaches Steve Gorecki, John Castine and Larry Miller, close out their sea-son in the WACO Wolves Wooden Bat Tournament to be played at Founders Fields in Farmington Hills this weekend.

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