

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 Alliance World Series in St. Louis after suffering a one-run quarterfinal loss.

The state champion Blues placed the highest of five Michigan 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, 8-7.

This World Series attracted the top 13-year-old 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 Colours, the defending AAYBA 12-year-old gold champions, with one of their best hitting games of the season. Tom Spisich was 3-for-3 while Jeff Gorecki, Stephen Doty, Brooks Tyn and Chase Dehne got two hits each in a 14-hit effort. Josh Rebanti pitched a three-hitter with four strikeouts and a walk. Rebanti also had two runs batted in in the 11-1 win, which was shortened to five innings by the mercy rule.

On the second day, Blues catcher Jonathan Castine hit well in both ends of a doubleheader with three home runs, including two grand slams. In the first game, the Blues led the Orlando Park (Ill.) 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 10-3 win. Matt Paul went the distance for the win, allowing four hits and a walk while striking out four.

In their second game, Mount Zion (Ill.) held Castine hitless 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 fell behind 4-1 in the bottom of the third to the Kentucky Titans, who scored four runs on Blues' errors. In the top of the sixth, the Blues narrowed the gap to 4-3 on a single by Andy Harris and an inside-the-park homer by Castine.

Paul then walked and Doty singled before Brendan Clarke delivered a two-run, go-ahead double. The Blues gave pitcher Abbenatton 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 Sixteen.

That set the stage for the Blues' three-hour marathon 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.

Rebanti came on in relief to keep it 4-3. In the bottom of the seventh, the Rush scored an unearned run with two outs to tie it, but on the same play second baseman Tyn threw from the outfield grass to stop the potential winning run at home with a throw 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 7-7. When they didn't score in the

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 in third for a 3-2-5 double play. In the 13th, Tyn scored on a game-winning RBI single by Dehne. Paul came in to get the save, getting the three hitters on fly balls. Rebanti got the win, pitching 6 1/3 innings of relief.

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 leading the bases in both the sixth and seventh innings.

In the bottom of the seventh, the Indians got a single and an error to put runners on second and third with no outs. Gorecki, who pitched an eight-hitter, gave up an intentional walk to load the bases and, with one out, then issued a walk to force in the game-winning run in the 4-3 loss.

The loss forced the Blues into a quick turn-around game against the Eddie Brooks Stars of Kentucky. The Blues rallied with three runs in the top of the sev-

enth to take a 5-4 lead on RBIs by Spisich, Rebanti and Paul.

But the Stars scratched out a run to force the game into extra innings and went on to win, 6-5, on a run-scoring single in the bottom of the eighth. The Blues played the Mississippi Outlaws on the last day for seventh place with Thomas on the mound. He got run support with RBIs from Spisich, Castine, Gorecki, Paul and Tyn, and in relief from Rebanti, who pitched to one batter for a game-saving double play and 3-0 win.

The Blues outscored their

opponents 57-27 throughout the World Series and had a .311 team batting average. Leading hitters were Castine (.480, 17 RBI, eight runs and four homers), Dehne (.474, three RBI, five runs), Clarke (.471, three RBI, three runs), Spisich (.419, five RBI, eight runs) and Tyn (.304, three RBI, 10 runs).

The team's earned run average was 1.27 with Rebanti at 0.59, Gorecki at 0.91 and Thomas at 1.06. The Blues returned home with an overall record of 48-9, including the state championship, two tournament wins, two tourna-

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 Tyn with assistant coaches Steve Gorecki, John Castine and Larry Miller, close out their season in the WACO Wolves Wooden Bat Tournament to be played at Founders Fields in Farmington Hills this weekend.

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STATE OF MICHIGAN, PROBATE
COURT, COUNTY OF OAKLAND, MI
No. 2002-254-056-DE

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Decedent's Estate
Estate of Allen John Simpson,
Decedent, Social Security No. 101-03-
0753.

TO ALL CREDITORS: The
decedent, Allen John Simpson, who
died at 1030 N. Adams, 93rd,
Birmingham, Michigan, died June 24,
2002. Creditors of the decedent are
notified that all claims against the
estate will be forever barred unless
presented to Cassin Bank, named
personal representative or proposed
personal representative, or both the
probate court at 1000 N. Telegraph
Road, Dept. 487, Pontiac, and the
named/proposed personal
representative within 4 months after
the date of publication of this notice.

Personal representative: Cassin Bank,
200 Woodward Avenue, 22nd
Floor, Detroit, MI 48226. Phone (313) 222-
4228.
Attorney: Robert A. Ketchum, P18024,
180 W. Jefferson, Suite 200, Detroit,
MI 48226-4118. Phone (313) 486-5776.
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