

York Township/Glen Rock captures Early Bird tourney title

By RYAN VANDERSLOOT *For The York Dispatch*

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Glen Rock's Fritz Allison connects for an RBI single during the Susquehanna Baseball League Early...

EAST PROSPECT -- It may be called the Susquehanna Baseball League Early Bird Tournament, but everything seemed in midseason form for the York Township/Glen Rock team.

Managed by Glen Rock's Kim McCullough and assisted by Township's new skipper, Brad Chambers, there was no stopping the strong lineup and pitching depth that the two managers put on the field.

In Sunday's championship of the three-day event played at East Prospect, the Township/Rock team clubbed 17 hits and rode the solid pitching performances of Brad McCullough and Casey Markey to a 12-7 victory over a combination team from Red Lion/East Prospect/Conrads of the Susquehanna League. That team went by the Red Lion name in the tournament program.

"We played some pretty good baseball for this early in the year," Kim McCullough said. "This was two nice ballclubs joining together and it made a pretty nice batting lineup."

The majority of the team was comprised of the Township club, with a handful of Rock regulars, such as Fritz Allison, Tim Hare, Tim Frisch and Brad McCullough, thrown into the mix. The result was four victories over the three days and a nice trophy.

After earning a 2-0 victory over Jacobus on Friday, the Township/Rock club routed Cly 12-2 and earned its way into the championship game of the 10-team field by defeating Gildea's Raiders 8-2.

The fortunate thing for Kim McCullough was that he had his best pitcher, his son Brad, available Sunday. That was because Brad McCullough, who's also the varsity baseball coach for Kennard-Dale High School, was busy coaching on Friday and Saturday.

"Whenever you have one of your better pitchers available for the championship game, that makes it all that much easier for me as a manager," Kim McCullough said.

Brad McCullough got off to a bit of a rocky start. He walked Jimi Nomikos to lead off the game and gave up an RBI single to Conrads shortstop Travis Hake that made it 1-0. Hake is a former member of the York Revolution and Lancaster Barnstormers.

The deficit didn't last long. Township's Jared Frey clubbed a tape-measure home run to lead off the game for the hosts off Conrads' Justin Cunningham. John Jamison followed with a double and scored on Scott Hart's single to put Township/Rock ahead for good at 2-1. An inning later, the lead grew to 5-1 when Jamison, who drove in Frey with a single, scored on a Hart sac fly and Hare plated Allison with a two-out single.

Hake cut the lead to 5-3 with a two-run blast off of McCullough in the third, but Township/Rock got one back in the bottom of the inning when Drew Kelley singled in Scott Stevens, who doubled to lead off the inning.

The home team put the game away with a six spot in the fifth when they collected four straight singles and got a little help from some sloppy defense that allowed a couple more runs to score.

Red Lion got to Township reliever Jay Dimler for four runs in the seventh, two of which came on Greg Rhodes' two-run home run, but it wasn't enough.

It proved to be a very good start for Frey, who finished with four hits to go along with three runs and an RBI from the leadoff spot. Last year, Frey was more of a middle-of-the-lineup, guy so the move to the top of the order took a bit of getting used to.

"This felt pretty good," he said. "I was on base a lot and I hit the ball OK (Friday and Saturday), but nothing like I did today."

The idea to bring the teams together was the idea of both McCullough and former Township skipper Steve Gergle. Glen Rock has a number of college players that are unavailable this early in the season, but they still wanted to get some work in for the veterans, so it was a marriage that worked out well.

"Steve and I decided to team up last year and we had a good time so we decided to do it again this year," McCullough said. "Plus Brad (Chambers) and I are best friends so this works out real nice."

Notes: The Early Bird gave fans their first chance to see a couple of familiar faces in some new places. One notable was Windsor's Doug Bacon, who had played with Red Lion since that team rejoined the league. The Cardinals also picked up longtime Hallam third baseman Justin Seitz as well as Brad Lloyd, who played with Township a year ago. Bacon started Friday's game against Township/Rock and pitched well, but was victimized by Allison, who hit a home run in the 2-0 victory.

Eric McNeil had three hits for Red Lion, while Hake collected two hits. Jason Enoch, back from a brief tryout with the Barnstormers, finished the game with 1 1/3 scoreless innings.

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