

Another successful weekend for the Canton Storm - this time in the Brighton Classic Tournament. The team played 4 games and reached at least the semi-finals for the 3rd straight tournament. We started out early Saturday morning against a solid Jet Box team from Macomb County. The pitchers did their job by keeping the east siders scoreless through 6 innings. Erich Payne and Josh Janovsky threw for a combined total of 5 strikeouts and 89 pitches. The outfield did a great job by catching a combined total of 4 flyouts. The offense was quiet early as we only scored 1 run through 4 innings. That single run came when Robert Barnes scored on a passed ball. The fifth inning was a breakout inning for the offense. Matt Lessel started things off with a walk. Justin Raylean laid down a nice sacrifice bunt to move Matt to second. Four consecutive singles by O'Donnell, Payne, Rubis and Sprosek and a sacrifice by Barnes added 4 insurance runs. The game finished 5-0.

The second game turned out to be a rematch of the Pinckney Championship game. Another back-and-forth affair with scores of 0-1, 2-1, 3-2, 3-6, 6-6, and 7-6. Nick Sprosek, Jake O'Donnell, and Josh Janovsky pitched well combining for 4 strikeouts and 110 pitches. Storm scoring started in the second inning with Nick Sprosek hitting a single, Noah Haran walking and both being brought home by a Josh Janovsky single. In the third inning Justin Raylean hustled out a mishandled ground ball to second base. Jake O'Donnell moved him with a single and Matt Brooks drove the run in with a solid base hit up the middle on an 0-2 count. The fifth inning had Jake O'Donnell reaching first on a fielder's choice and Matt Brooks on a walk. Three consecutive RBI singles by Payne, Rubis and Sprosek scored O'Donnell, Brooks, and Payne and tied the game going into the sixth inning. In the final inning Matt Lessel drew a walk and then hustled all the way around the bases on a HUGE game winning triple by Jake O'Donnell!

Winning the first two games meant we won our pool and guaranteed us a trip to the semi-finals. However, prior to semi's – we had a cross over match against a solid Brighton Black team. Justin Raylean and Josh Rubis pitched well and held Brighton to only 5 runs. Unfortunately, the Storm bats went quiet in the mid-afternoon match-up and we only managed to push across 3 runs of our own. All 3 runs were scored in the 2nd inning when hits by Noah Haran and Justin Raylean scored Robert Barnes, Josh Janovsky, and Noah. This was a minor set-back and the team stayed up-beat for the upcoming semi-final game.

Our fourth and final game of the weekend was against a strong South Farmington Blues team. Erich Payne and Josh Janovsky both threw well – but the South Farmington bats found all the gaps on the way to 11 runs. Our lone run of the game was scored in the 3rd inning when Jake Dattilio – fresh off his vacation in Florida – reached base on 2 out walk. Jake O'Donnell followed with a line drive RBI double to left field. The remainder of the offense was provided by a 1st inning double by Erich Payne and a single by Justin Raylean in the 5th.

All-in-all it was a great weekend of baseball.

As fate would have it – and with no rest for the weary – our regular league schedule brought the match-up of the two undefeated 12u Canton teams the following day. Nick Sprosek and Erich Payne held the Thunder to only 3 runs on 100 pitches over 7 innings. They allowed a mere 6 hits while getting 7 strike

outs. The Storm offense was first to score with 2 runs in the 2nd inning. Nick Sprosek singled to start the inning and Robert Barnes reached base on a well-placed ball between the legs of the pitcher. Matt Lessel followed with a one-out single that scored both Sprosek and Barnes. The 4th inning started with Josh Janovsky reaching base on a mishandled ball by the first baseman. Then two beautiful sacrifice bunts by Matt Lessel and Justin Raylean brought Josh around the bases for the 3rd run. The scoring continued in the 4th with a lead off single by Jake O'Donnell. Matt Brooks followed with an RBI single to score Jake. With 1 out in the inning, Josh Rubis stroked a long double to right center to score Matt. After stealing 3rd base, Josh scored our 6th run on a hard hit ball by Nick Sprosek. In the final inning Josh Janovsky hit a nice 1-out double and scored on a single by Matt Lessel. Justin Raylean reached base on a fielder's choice and scored with a mighty triple off the bat of (smiling) Jake Dattilio.

The final score was 8-3 and kept the Storm undefeated in league play with only a couple of weeks remaining.