

Canton Storm Wins 2011 Pirate Classic!

What a great weekend for baseball! On Sunday June 5th the Canton Storm finished the 5th game of the weekend with a hard fought victory in the finals of the Pinckney Pirate Classic! Not bad for coming into the Semi-finals as the Wild Card Team!

The tournament started Saturday against a much weaker Perrysburg team. That game ended at 3 innings with a 29-0 win. This was a great warm-up and everyone had a chance to hit and run the bases. Highlights include 2 homeruns & a double by Josh Rubis. Josh Janovsky and Justin Raylean combined to throw just 56 pitches, while facing 12 batters and accumulating 9 strike outs.

After finishing the game just after noon, the team spent the better part of afternoon on the deck of Zukey Lake Tavern.

The second game in pool play was against the Howell Hawks, a well-coached team that plays a very similar style of baseball. The boys played solid defense and hit the ball hard. Both teams played well but almost every bounce went the way of the Hawks. Chase Timko hit a couple of hard shots to center field - but both were caught. We knew we were in trouble when an excellent scoring opportunity in the 4th inning was ended when the ball hit by Josh Rubis struck Matt Brooks while running to second base. The lone Storm run of the game was scored by Nick Sprosek after his single in the 5th inning. It was a tough 5-1 loss but the team kept their heads up and remained focused on the upcoming games.

Sunday morning the Storm faced the Pinckney Black team. Matt Brooks and Chase Timko joined the Home Run Club with back to back Home Runs in the 2nd inning. This was just after Jake O'Donnell was robbed of a Home Run by a well-placed hole in the left field fence. Chase Timko, Matt Brooks, Noah Haran and Jake O'Donnell were perfect at the plate. Nick Sprosek and Josh Janovsky needed only 48 pitches to dispatch the 15 batters they faced over 4 innings in the 12-2 win.

While waiting to find out if we made the semi-finals the team went back to Zukey Lake Tavern - this time for brunch in the air-conditioned comfort of the lower level.

The semi-final game was against the Grass Lake Wardogs. Chase Timko, Erich Payne, Jake O'Donnell, and Jake Datillio all had multi-hit games. Jake Datillio and Matt Lessel had two of the nicest bunts you'll ever see to help score runs in the 4th inning. Erich Payne and Jake O'Donnell went 3 innings each and threw a total of 108 pitches while holding Grass Lake to only 9 hits and getting 9 strike outs. Overall, the team played well in the 8-4 win but was bittersweet as we lost Chase Timko for the rest of the summer to a broken finger.

The Championship game was by far the best game the boys have played this year. It was against the home town Pinckney Red team whose first 6 players were taller than our coaches (with one in serious need of a shave :). While clearly being tired from the previous 2 games that day - the game was a back and forth contest that tested the boys' ability to work through adversity and stay focused on the task at hand. What a battle: 1-1, 2-5, 6-5, 7-6, 8-6! There were heroics aplenty. Jake O'Donnell and Josh Janovsky were all over the outfield making some great catches on some hard hit Pirate balls. Josh Rubis had another long double to score the team's first run and send a clear message to the home team that the Canton Storm was not going to roll over. Jake Datillio scored in the second inning on a beautiful sacrifice bunt by Robert Barnes and a single by Justin Raylean. The 4th inning was a game turner when the team combined for 4 runs. A patient Josh Rubis walked to start the inning and was moved around on a base hit by Nick Sprosek. Josh scored on a sacrifice by Jake Datillio. Robert

followed with a single to score Nick. Justin reached base by out hustling a slight bobble at second base and then both scored on single by Josh Janovsky. The lead was short lived with the Pirates scoring 2 more in their half of the 5th inning setting up the biggest come-from-behind victory in our team's short history. In our half of the 5th inning - and facing the hardest throwing pitcher in the tournament - Jake O'Donnell reached base by beating out a throw on a missed third strike. Erich Payne stepped up to the plate with 2 outs and hit a shot down 1st base scoring Jake and tying the game. After Josh Rubis reached base on 4 straight pitches - Nick Sprosek hit his second single of the game to score Erich with the go ahead run setting up a nail biter in the 6th and final inning. Erich Payne took the mound and put the first batter on base with an errant change-up. The team maintained focus - but it looked like most of the parent's stomachs were starting to knot-up! Erich struck out the second batter but allowed the runner to move to second base on a pitch in the dirt. The count was 1-1 when another low pitch triggered the base runner to make an attempt to steal 3rd base. It might have been extra innings (or worse) if Josh Rubis hadn't quickly found the handle and made a brilliant throw to Jake O'Donnell at 3rd to catch the runner for the second out. Erich then proceeded to put the next 2 pitches past a swinging Pirate batter to lock up the Championship.

CONGRATULATIONS CANTON STORM - 2011 12U Pinckney Classic CHAMPIONS!!!!!!

PINCKNEY PIRATE CLASSIC RESULTS

	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Canton Storm	11	14	4				29
Perrysburg	0	0	0				0
Howell Hawks	0	0	1	3	1	0	5
Canton Storm	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Pinckney Black	1	0	0	1			2
Canton Storm	2	6	3	1			12
Grass Lake Wardogs	1	0	0	2	0	1	4
Canton Storm	1	3	1	2	1		8
Pinckney Red	1	2	0	2	2	0	7
Canton Storm	1	1	0	4	2		8