

Orleans Rebels Junior Girls Invited to Play in National Softball Championships

Great news for Orleans Rebels Junior Girls - pitcher Jillian Taylor and LF Sam Pantalone were picked up by the Clarington Cougars for the Junior Nationals in Montreal August 6-12 (www.quebecnational.com). Both players performed well - as did our team OVERALL - in the Junior I Grands last weekend in Pickering (JULY 21-23).

For our first year at Junior and at Tier 1, we met (maybe even exceeded) our expectations, going 1-2 in the double-knockout tournament. The Rebels finished 7th overall ahead of Palmerston, Whitby and Hamilton - Pickering, Port Perry, Oakville and Clarington made the top 4 and are off to the Nationals in Montreal.

Here is a brief summary of the Rebels' performance in the games at Junior I Grands:

Won our first game 4-0 versus Palmerston Marlins on Friday night and played a very solid game on both sides of the ball. In fact, in the top of the 1st where we scored 2 runs, we left the bases loaded, so the result could have been even better. Palmerston won the Junior I bronze last year so this was a nice accomplishment.

Second game on SATURDAY MORNING vs Clarington Cougars (they had Stephanie Reid at SS who played with the national program last year), we lost 6-1. A 4-runs against 2nd inning did us in - Reid hit a 2-run inside the park home run.

Our third game vs Windsor Wildcats demonstrated that it is truly a game of inches - a normal break here and there could have easily turned a misleading 6-2 loss into a win. We were even with them in the pitching and fielding departments, however, many of our well-connected line drives with players on base maddeningly couldn't find any gaps and landed in gloves. And early in the game, Windsor batters were masterful at connecting for short flares just beyond the infield. A 3-run Windsor triple eventually buried us. A solid effort right to the end however; in the bottom of the 7th, the Rebels scored a run and left runners at second and third (a win in this game, MAY have allowed us to crack the top 5).

Pickering Heat and Port Perry Angels were the cream of the crop - especially last year's national champ Pickering with such players on their roster like Robin Mackin, Tessa Thomas, Izzy Trottier. Obviously with this level of competition (current and ex-National players sprinkled everywhere), the margin for error is much less. However, with some hard work and perseverance and a slightly bolstered roster, I think THE JUNIOR REBELS are on the path to giving it a good shot to qualify for a Nationals BERTH next year or thereafter.

Orleans Rebels Junior girls are: Carolyn Chmiel, Sarah Collins, Erin Durant, Lindsey Hutton, Jenn Labelle, Shannon Lundrigan, Samantha Pantalone, Sarah Renaud, Jillian Taylor, Sarah Thompson. Coaches - Cory Morrison, John Hutton, Ed Renaud.

Jim Taylor
Manager, Orleans Rebels Junior