

Diamond Dirt

2009



FASTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP
St. Thomas, Ont.



The Official Newsletter
of the Canadian Championship

Issue #1

Sunday August 30, 2009

John Thompson, Editor

ST. THOMAS HOSTING IN A BIG WAY

St. Thomas has a reputation for doing things up big. Airlines have their jumbo jets, vendors have their jumbo hot dogs and St. Thomas has the original Jumbo.

In fastball, many communities have double-diamonds back-to-back or side-by-side. Some communities have a four-plex of softball diamonds with a central apex. In St. Thomas, it's only natural to be "jumbo" - hence the five-plex of diamonds in Doug Tarry Sports



Complex, the host site of the 2009 Softball Canada National Senior Men's championships.

From whence does "Jumbo" originate in this Elgin County community? Harken back to the late 1800s for a tale that has survived the passing of time (thanks to Bruce Ricketts for the content of the story of Jumbo, which will unfold in Diamond Dirt for the next few days) (continued on Page #4)

Today's Key Games ...



Get your opening day seats for exciting action
11 am - Vancouver Grey Sox vs Kitchener Hallman Rivershark Twins
6 pm - **OPENING CEREMONIES**
7 pm - St John's Kelly's Pub vs **ST. THOMAS EVERGREEN CENTENNIALS**

Diamond Dirt

Diamond Dirt newsletter is published daily for the enjoyment of fans at the 2009 Canadian championships. Feedback is welcome - leave your message for **DIAMOND DIRT** at the Media Office, Attn: John Thompson, Editor or e-mail him at sstj99@yahoo.com

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ROSTER REVIEWS

The number of teams may be fewer, but the quality of play may be even more intense than in previous Canadian championships. With teams allowed "pick-ups" to supplement their rosters, most of the premier Canadian players will be in attendance this week – some in team uniforms that may appear somewhat surprising.

The round robin portion of the week may smack of immateriality, as all eight teams will qualify for the playoffs. However, excitement will prevail for games affecting the middle of the standings, as the top four teams receive "double-life" while the remaining four will be on the ever-dangerous "single-life" immediately on Saturday morning.

The following profiles are based on information prior to the team manager's meeting when last minute roster additions could enhance team's capabilities.

However, such is the state of men's fastball and this will not diminish the competitive nature of the games, nor should it compromise fans enjoyment of the action between the foul lines.

In alphabetical order, here's a tom-thumb-nailsize review of the teams:

BROOKFIELD ELKS

Nova Scotia

On the mound **P Brian Urquhart** has a solid resume, and the Elks will ride his arm through the tough round-robin schedule, while **C Jason Sanford**, formerly of the Rivershark Twins, enjoyed a week of competent receiving for Madison, WI Farm Tavern at the ISC Worlds.

CHARLOTTETOWN FAWCETTS

Prince Edward Island

In preparation for hosting the 2010 Canadians, Charlottetown will be making creating Maritime waves in the round robin, based on the arrival of **P Frank Cox**. **P Ward Gosse** logged huge and effective innings for St. Thomas at the Quad Cities ISC and provides a good stick in the line-up. The "Green Gables" provincial reps are optimistic of a memorable week.

GLACE BAY METS – Nova Scotia

As one of two teams from Nova Scotia, on paper the roster does not seem imposing. However, the boys down east know how to hammer the ball, and the Nets will be seeking validation that they can compete against the big-name pitchers and big-budget teams. **Greg Garrity**, amongst others, has ability to take the ball deep.

JARVIS GAMBLERS - Ontario

As Canadian medalists last year, and with a top ten finish at the recent ISC Worlds, this talented team of local fastball players fully intends to be contending on Championship

Sunday. Long-serving **P Andrew Phibbs** is joined by crafty southpaw **Paul Koert**, who carried Team USA to a 4th place finish at the ISF Worlds in Saskatoon. For added depth, **P Rob O'Brien** still has pitching prowess in addition to his potent bat, while **Tim McCumber** can also take to the mound if required. **OF Bill Simmons** is always a threat in the batters' box, and **IF Ian Fehrman** was the best Canadian batter at the ISF Worlds in July.

KITCHENER HALLMAN

RIVERSHARK TWINS – Ontario

Fresh off their solid defence of the ISC World Championship, the Twins are solid, deep, mean and on a roll. Injuries threatened to deter their quest, but depth on the bench prevailed. The team has never won a Canadian Championship – on the arms of **Dean Holein**, **Todd Martin**, **Grant Patterson** & **Don Scott**, that could change. Other national team members include **C/IF Craig Crawford**, **3B Jody Eidt**, **OFs Ryan Wolfe & Dale Levy** and **C Sean O'Brien**.

ST. JOHN'S KELLY'S PUB

MOLSON CANADIANS

Newfoundland

Canada's most eastern province has produced many skilled players, and the future looks extremely promising. The Kelly's Pub Juniors won the Canadian Championship in Owen Sound earlier this summer, led by **Mark Lewis** (.522 BA) and **Justin Gill** (.370 BA) who were named to the All-Star team. **Brad & Kyle Ezekiel** and

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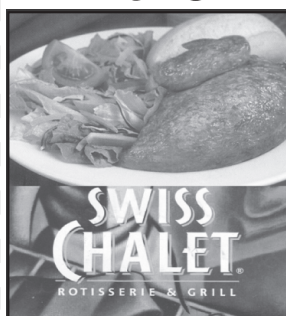
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Mike Nofall were also Nat'l Jr. Champs, and Darrell Tilley is back to the "rock" following his ISC appearance with Madison, WI Farm Tavern

ST. THOMAS EVERGREEN CENTENNIALS – Ontario (HOST)

As the Host Team, and two-time back-to-back (2005 and 2006) Canadian Champions the Centennials will be adrenalin induced for another good showing. The nucleus of the team has been together since 2005, sponsored by Evergreen Liquid Plant Food Inc. Last year the team earned bronze medals (behind local rival Jarvis and the current, but absent defending champion Saskatoon Aspen Interiors.) Strength is deep on the mound with mainstay Scott Wagar joined by the return of Rob Schweyer who has suited up in previous Canadians with St. Thomas, and the addition of Team Canada member Sean Whitten, amongst the hardest throwing pitchers in Canada. As a host team, the objective is not simply to represent St. Thomas and be competitive, but to be among the final four on Sunday competing for a medal.

VANCOUVER GREY SOX – B.C.

Fresh off a top ten finish at the ISC Worlds in Quad Cities, the Grey Sox always take aim at copping a medal at the Canadian Nationals. There's no shortage of pitchers itching to start for the Sox, with no fewer than five on the roster. Travis Price recently played as a member of the US National Team at the ISF Worlds in Saskatoon, and Derek Mayson

threw a masterful game for Team Canada, also at the Worlds. Veteran Gerald Muizelaar, who dominated the ISC at the turn of the millennium, can be effective as he "toes up" and Nick Underhill is regarded as a premier hurler. Young Tyson Barkman completes the quintet. The balance of the squad boasts experience and the team is looking for a break-through week to end the season.

ODDS OF WINNING 2009 CANADIAN NATIONALS

FAVOURED

3-2 Kitchener Hallman Rivershark Twins

Too much of everything – if Twins lose a game, (and it may happen) there should be an inquiry.

CONTENDERS

3-1 St. Thomas Evergreen Centennials

Team can scrape our memorable rally-innings, and Ps Whitten, Schweyer and Wagar should be effective. Proper deployment of pitching staff may be the solution.

4-1 Jarvis First Ontario Gamblers

So many times a brides-maid, and the trend will continue. Always an exciting squad to watch and capable of an upset – but will it happen on 2nd weekend?

6-1 Charlottetown Fawcetts

P Frank Cox is a horse and can be ridden while back-up Ward Gosse makes this team a prime contender and quite capable of grabbing a medal.

7-1 Vancouver Grey Sox

Lots of experience, a great roster, but must change stigma and inability to win the games that take them to the next level. Dog-fight for "double-life" means Sox must "pull 'em up" in games against the big boys.

PRETENDERS

10-1 St. John's Kelly's Pub

Will youthful exuberance carry-over from the Kelly's Pub squad that won the Canadian National Junior championship in Owen Sound. A team of the future will be tested in senior ranks throughout the week.

12-1 Brookfield Elks

Lack of depth and experience will hamper this game by over-matched squad. Wins will not come easily against the top teams, but interesting match-ups with others could provide a few "Ws"

15-1 Glace Bay Mets

The week will be one of getting educated at the Nationals. Any win will be regarded as a highlight, but look for early dismissal on Saturday. All that being said, the host community is so glad to have all the eastern seaboard teams competing and enjoying St. Thomas hospitality.

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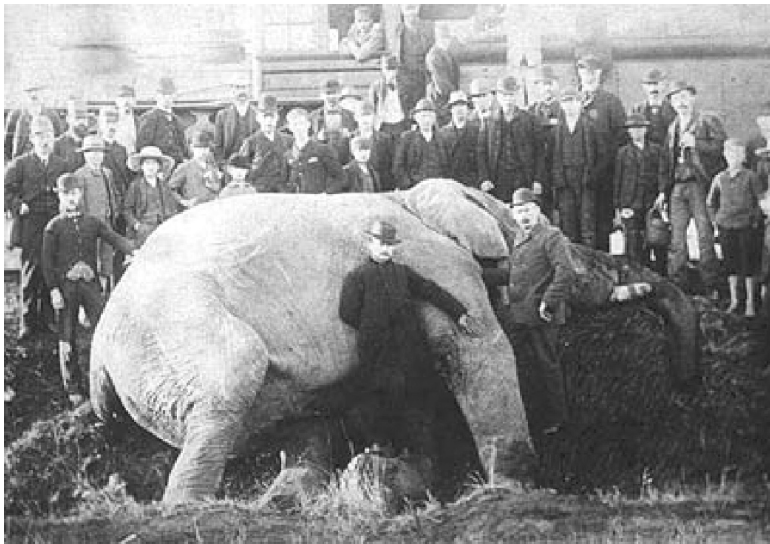
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The Tale of JUMBO

(from page 1)

On the night of September 15, 1885, the Circus was playing the town of St. Thomas, Ontario. The circus' 29 elephants had completed their routines and all but two had been led from the big top to their waiting railway cars. Only the smallest, named Tom Thumb, and the largest, Jumbo, remained until the end of the show to take a final bow. After the completion of the show, as Matthew Scott guided Tom Thumb and Jumbo along the tracks, a loud whistle announced an impending doom. An unscheduled express train, unable to stop, hit Tom Thumb, scooping him up on its cowcatcher and knocking him down a steep embankment. Jumbo, who was leading Tom Thumb



was caught between the embankment and circus train and had no place to flee. He was hit from the rear. The train was derailed and Jumbo was crushed; his skull reportedly broken in over a hundred places. Still conscious and groaning, even with the massive injuries, the mortally wounded elephant was

comforted by Scott until it died.

A life-size statue of the elephant commemorates the tragedy in St. Thomas. Some towns folk also painted a circus mural on one of their buildings.

(More on "Jumbo" in upcoming issues of Diamond Dirt)



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a slice above

HOURS OF OPERATION:
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