

HF Sports = Recreational Facilities

Riverview bantams prepared for national tournament

A's coach proud of his team's chemistry

BY COLIN MCPHAIL
TIMES & TRANSCRIPT STAFF

According to Mike Donahoe, the important difference between his Riverview A's and other teams is chemistry.

The A's coach is confident the squad's familiarity will pay dividends over the pieced together all-star teams coming from the other provinces in the 2011 Baseball Canada Bantam Championships.

"The biggest thing we have is

that we're a team," said Donahoe.

"Sometimes when you get a bunch of all-stars together, the continuity... sometimes they don't really blend together. We mesh really well together. One feeds of the other."

The core of the group has been playing together since the Mosquito level, winning a number of provincial and Atlantic titles before earning the right to represent New Brunswick at national tournament next week in Vaughn, Ont.

They are the first Riverview baseball club to attend a national championship.

The A's saw a number of key players enter midget age this year, however, leaving noticeable gaps in the lineup. "We had to do a little rebuilding and retooling, and we're better than ever," assured Donahoe.

Part of the process was the addition of three provincial players to round out their batting order and starting rotation.

Corey Kavanagh and Corey Ouellette of the Fredericton Royals and Logan Saunders of the Kennebecasis Valley Red Sox were brought in to compliment the A's roster on and off the field.

"I picked them up for their base-

ball ability, but I also watched them play over the years and I want the kids I bring in to our team to mesh and blend."

Donahoe recognizes, however, bringing a well-rounded squad to Vaughn, Ont. next Monday won't be enough to win.

Mental toughness and focus is paramount in success.

"It's our job as coaches to make sure they stay within themselves."

Donahoe credits his coaching staff for keeping the kids level-headed and focused heading into the big event. However, he's most proud of the attitude in the dugout.

He recalled how A's player Julian Galloway was always a strong motivator on and off the field, but when he was down, the team quickly rallied around him.

"He had a bad at-bat over the weekend and got really upset and everyone picked him up," said Donahoe.

"We've got a really good chemistry."

The A's bench boss said it's that precise chemistry that helped them win the elimination tournament in July to earn a spot in the tourna-

► See DONAHOE, B7

Donahoe confident squad will perform

► Continued From B1

ment, and is hoping it will pay off next week.

That being said, Donahoe knows full well the stiff competition awaiting them in Vaughn.

With a much larger pool of talent and resources in provinces like Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia, one might opt for a group of provincial all-stars.

Yet, Donahoe stays firm in his stance.

"We're a little behind the eight ball heading in, but I wouldn't trade my guys for anybody," he said.

"If would pick an all-star team, a bunch of them would come off this team 'cause they're a talented group of guys."