

LAKE VILLA DEFENDERS 11U TRAVEL BASEBALL TEAM TAKES 1ST PLACE IN THE MCHENRY WOOD BAT CLASSIC!



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On May 28 - 31, 2010, the Lake Villa Defenders traveled to McHenry, Illinois to take part in the Memorial Day Wood Bat Classic.

The Defenders played four (4) games during the holiday weekend and went undefeated during the entire tournament. The Defenders began the tournament on Friday by shutting out Avon Township Doubleheaders, 10 – 0. CJ Wiechert pitched three (3) no-hit, shutout innings, facing the minimum, nine (9) batters. Ryan Kelley came in to pitch the fourth and last inning, facing only four (4) batters himself. The Defenders offense came alive in the first inning, when the team put up three (3) runs. The lead off hitter, Joe Kendzierski, started the rally by hitting a home run on the first pitch! The defense remained strong and supported their pitchers by making solid plays throughout the game.

In the Saturday game, the Defenders picked up where they left off, scoring two (2) quick runs in the first inning against the McHenry Tournament team. After the leadoff hitter got on base, Ben Kusiak came through with an RBI triple to get the Defenders on the board. The Defenders played consistent baseball, scoring in each of the first 5 innings thanks to extra base hits from Davin Gleason, Justin Romeo, and Tommy Jones. This was another exemplary performance by the Defenders pitchers: Davin Gleason, Tim Otter, Joe Kendzierski, Justin Romeo, and Ben Kusiak. Combined, the pitching staff allowed only one (1) run on 2 hits, while striking out 11 batters. Justin Romeo struck out the side in the 4th inning.

The Defenders returned to McHenry early Sunday and the team began preparations for what proved to be an exciting game as the Defenders faced a talented McHenry Cobras team. The Defenders were determined and played phenomenal baseball, beating the Cobras 4 – 1. “This was an important game for our team”, said Tom Jones, coach for the Lake Villa Defenders. “The players came to this game focused. They played strong defense and our pitchers did a superb job of keeping the Cobras off the bases”, he said. In fact, the Defenders pitchers: CJ Wiechert, Joe Kendzierski, and Davin Gleason, allowed only 4 base runners during the entire game. Tommy Jones got the Defenders on the scoreboard in the 3rd inning with a double to the center field fence, scoring Garrett Mang who singled earlier in the inning. Justin Romeo and CJ Wiechert continued the hitting barrage with a double and single, respectively, putting the Defenders up 3 - 0. The Cobras and Defenders each scored in the 5th inning, giving the Defenders a game winning, 4 – 1 advantage. This win put the Defenders in the Championship Game on Memorial Day.

On Memorial Day, the Defenders had to weather the storm as heavy rains came down in the morning. The Championship Game was moved up, as an earlier start time was called in an attempt to get the game played between storm fronts. That didn't affect the Defender team as they remained firm and unyielding in their quest for their first championship in 2010. Davin Gleason was back on the mound and pitched 3 solid innings, giving up only one run. The

Defenders got on the board early in the first inning when Ryan Kelley hit a hard single up the middle, scoring Joe Kendzierski and Ben Kusiak. Chandler Mang started the 2nd inning scoring opportunity with a triple. Tommy Jones came to bat next and got two quick strikes. Jones remained determined to get his teammate across the plate and hit a single to left field, scoring Mang. The Defenders sent 11 batters to the plate in the 4th inning. The first five batters in the inning landed on base. Ricky Allen started the inning with a single up the middle, followed by clutch bunt hits from both Ryan Peters and Garrett Mang. Chandler Mang hit a solid single up the middle, scoring one run. Tommy Jones walked, forcing in a run. Of the 11 batters sent to the plate, five of them scored. The Defenders were leading 10 -1 going into the top of the 5th inning. Justin Romeo came on in relief in the 4th inning and faced only three batters, striking out one. Romeo took command of the mound in the 5th inning, facing only 3 batters once again, striking out one. Gary Mang, manager of the Defenders said: "Romeo was on fire today. He had pin-point pitching accuracy and had good command of his fastball." The Defenders had 3 consecutive hits in the bottom of the 5th inning, scoring one run and putting the game out of reach. Final score: Lake Villa Defenders 11, McHenry Cobras 1.

The Defenders allowed only 3 runs in this 4 game tournament. Tom Jones concluded by saying: "The team set goals for this tournament and the players challenged each other to meet those goals. Their defense was solid, the pitching was near perfect, and the wood bats came alive during all four games. This is truly a team win". Gary Mang couldn't agree more. "I am very proud of our Defender team. The players stayed focused and played to their potential."

With cheers in the bleachers from parents, family, and friends, the Lake Villa Defenders were crowned the Champions in the 2010 McHenry Wood Bat Classic 11U Division!



From left to right:

Front Row: Tim Otter, Justin Romeo, Ryan Peters, Joe Kendzierski, Chandler Mang, Ricky Allen, Tommy Jones, CJ Wiechert, Davin Gleason, Ryan Kelley, Garrett Mang, Ben Kusiak

Second Row: Coach Andy Otter, Coach Tom Jones, Coach Vince Kendzierski, Coach Chris Wiechert, Manager Gary Mang