



FEEL THE BUZZ!!

The week that was...

This first installment of our weekly discussion covers a little more than a week but who's counting? The answer, as Yellow Jackets discovered, when you get off to an 0-4 start, is just about everybody. It starts to get awfully noisy when you drop a few in a row to start a season so Saturday night's tough 3-2 win at home over Yorkton was huge.

Despite the slow start it wasn't too hard to see the foundation for coach Marty Berson's unwavering faith in a group he calls the most talented he's been around in his 30 plus years spent in dugouts all over California. The Jackets were on the wrong end of two one-sided results —vs. Regina June 30th and Swift Current June 2nd — that sometimes crop up when new group is getting to know one another.

It was the other two losses that—from a fan's perspective—offered pain and promise as the qualities that make this team look like a serious contender became apparent. In both games—a 12 inning, 6-5 road loss to Regina on June 31st and a 2-1 defeat at home on Friday night—the Jackets showed themselves to be an athletic, ultra-competitive group backed up by gutsy, at times dominating, pitching from a deep and talented staff. The Jackets thought they beat themselves in those two games and, you don't have to be a stat-freak—as a wise man once said, there are lies, damn lies, and statistics (and then there's David Ortiz's birth certificate)—to look at the 11 errors in those two one run losses, and decide they're right.

Jordan Rawlyk took to the mound Saturday night knowing his team desperately needed a spark and pitched 6 outstanding innings, striking out six before exiting the game with a 3-2 lead (neither run was earned). Mike Frisina, making his third appearance, struck out three in two key shut-out innings before handing the ball over to Logan Clewes who closed it out in the ninth. The gorgeous double play that ended the game contained a hint of poetic justice. Left fielder John Jones scored two runs, and Matt Luchessi plated the Jacket's 3rd. Dillon Okrane and Thomas Robulack had RBIs.

If the clichés about pitching and championships are right, this Yellow Jackets staff has to have GM Dave Riggs excited. The YJ's are going to be in every game they play and when the bats inevitably heat up coach Berson is going to have a field day playing his aggressive brand of ball with an athletic and tough team.

Sunday's road game against Moose Jaw was rained out.

The week that will be...

The Yellow Jackets will be looking to build some momentum as they travel to Moose Jaw Thursday night, June 11 for a tilt with the Millers before returning home to Cairns field, for a critical three game home-stand that will be a blast for fans and players alike. It opens Friday, June 12th against the Medicine Hat Mavericks at 7 pm. On Saturday June 13th also, at 7pm, the Melville Millionaires are in town for the first of a two game series that concludes with a wonderful afternoon of baseball action Sunday, June 14th at 2:35pm.

Player of the week...Joel Cardinal

While the Jackets have started a bit slowly offensively at the plate, home-town stalwart Joel Cardinal picked up where he left off last season. Hitting out of the 3 spot in the line-up, the veteran shortstop has looked increasingly comfortable, hitting the ball hard to all fields. Cardinal will be a key part of the Yellow Jackets offense (and defense) all season long. With two doubles among his nine hits, his .429 average places him 8th in league hitting. Honourable mention—Scott Klassen who has hit .353 with a double and 2 RBIs; and John Jones who leads the team in RBIs (3) and runs scored (4).



Pitcher of the week...

This should be a tough call with the wealth of quality innings provided by the staff, but Jordan Rawlyk's first two starts make the choice easy. His first outing on the road in Regina was a solid effort in which he gave up a single earned run, receiving a no-decision as the Jackets lost in extras; he took to the mound for a second time on Saturday night and delivered the clutch performance that earned him the first Jackets' win of the season.

He is 1-0 with a miniscule 0.79 era and 10 strikeouts in 11 innings pitched on the season.

Honourable Mention: Mike Frisinia, who will take the ball in any situation, leads the team with 3 appearances putting up a 2.61 era in 10 innings with 8 Ks. Dan Moriari has an eye-popping 10 strikeouts in 6 innings and sports a solid 3.00 ERA.

Player Profiles...

Player Profile: Matt Lucchesi #6 Catcher

College Ball: Niagara.

By now Yellow Jackets fans are familiar with the defense, toughness and leadership that returning catcher Matt Lucchesi displays on the field. Those are good enough reasons to choose him for our first player profile but we were interested to talk to the guy who's surely the most qualified to give some insight on the new YJ pitching staff. Beware Junior Jacket parents, if your kids want to don "the tools of ignorance" Lucchesi says you'll need a good dry cleaner.

Hometown?

San Francisco.

Do you miss it?

Well, I miss my family. My friends as well, I miss them all. I also miss the city itself, it's a great city.

What are your impressions of Saskatoon?

I like it a lot. The guys on the team are great. There's lots to do in the city. And, the people. I really like the people here.

Favorite thing about playing baseball?

Winning.

Enough said. Favorite major leaguer?

Brad Asmus

He's not the most obvious choice, how come ?

"He's the best defensive catcher in my mind. I idolized him as a kid and I've always tried to do a lot of the things he does, imitate him a bit."

Advice for an up a Junior Jacket who wants to catch for the YJs one day?

"Get dirty. Don't be afraid to get dirty. You have to block pitches in the dirt. You have to enjoy doing the hard stuff. Get in front of the ball. Do all the dirty stuff."

Does catching ever get into your hitting?

Absolutely...as a catcher you're always trying, with the pitcher, to set hitters up. Sometimes I'm up there and I'm thinking this is what I would do. So I'm looking for that pitch and if it doesn't come, that's a problem. When you get into guessing pitches you get into trouble.

You just have to get up there and "see ball, hit ball."

Early in the season is that you have the responsibility to learn 9 new pitchers in a relatively short time. What's that like?

It's fun. It's the part I consider fun. It is tough. You have to learn a bunch of new pitchers, what they're comfortable with, what like to throw in certain counts.

Well, what do you think of the staff?

Very, very good. Everybody I've caught so far has really impressed me. We're going to do some great things.

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Walk-up song?

Bring Sally Up, Bring Sally down.

Why?

To be honest, I heard someone else use it and thought it was awesome!

(next week: A touch of Klass. The Klassen brothers Scott and Trevor speak of playing on the same team in their hometown and, of course, who would come out on top in a brother vs. brother battle.)

Come out and see Matt along with the rest of the Yellow Jackets as they' come home, to Cairns field, for a critical three game home-stand opening Friday, June 12th against the Medicine Hat Mavericks at 7 pm. On Saturday June 13th also, at 7pm, the Melville Millionaires come into town for a two game series that concludes with a wonderful afternoon of baseball action Sunday, June 14th at 2:35pm.

If you have any questions, suggestions or topics you'd like to see in up-coming editions of the buzz drop us a line at cmsincer@yahoo.ca.

