

Local athlete competes at Mens? Softball World Cup]

Written By **Brian Lockhart**

Local softball player, Quinten Bruce, represented the nation as a member of Team Canada at the Men's Softball World Cup, held in Auckland, New Zealand Nov. 26 to Dec. 4.

Team Canada made it to the championship game, but lost to Australia in the final, earning the silver medal.

Quinten, who lives in Grand Valley, and attended Centre Dufferin High School in Shelburne, is a product of Grand Valley softball, where the sport is taken seriously. He started playing the sport when he was just three years old.

Quinten plays the outfield position.

?'It's the small town of Grand Valley ? in the winter everybody plays hockey, and in the summer the majority of kids play softball. It's been like that as long as I can remember,?' Quinten said of growing up in a town where softball is a way of life. ?I played baseball in Orangeville for two years, but it was a lot different, and the pace was a lot slower. Everyone here played softball, it was the sport of choice.?

He played through his teen years in a league organized by the Western Ontario Athletic Association. His team competed at the provincial level.

Keeping with the sport, he kept getting more and more involved.

?'There's an ISC circuit, and it's the highest level of club men's softball in North America,?' Quinten explained. ?There's 10 to 15 teams and they get international players. That's where your initial exposure to national teams is. Fortunately, I was picked up in my second last year of juniors by the Kitchener Cubs, the team was ranked pretty high. We were ranked sixth in the world. The first year I just sat on the bench, but it was a great learning experience. I was learning from all these guys who played for their country.?

Making team Canada was a process that took several years.

?'2019 was my breakout year, with the Kitchener Cubs,?' Quinten explained. ?Team Canada has an athlete pool ? it's a 40-man roster ? and every year the roster changes depending on what guy's commitment levels are, and when they are trying to bring in a new crop of players. In 2019, I was named to the 40-man roster and part of the pool. I got onto bigger and better teams, and this summer after the Canadian championships in St. John's Newfoundland, that's when I was approached by the head coach and coaching staff and asked if I was able to take three weeks off work to go to New Zealand.?

There were 12 teams competing in the World Cup.

?'The World Championships are held every two years,?' Quinten said. ?We were in the gold medal game, and we lost that game. There were 12 teams split into two groups of six. We started the tournament against Venezuela, and we beat them 3-2. Then we steamrolled a couple of teams, we beat Denmark 10-0, then South Africa 12-0. We were undefeated in round-robin play. We played Australia in the gold medal round and they beat us 5-2. They beat us in every aspect of the game ? they were just better than us that day.?

For Quinten, it was the chance of a lifetime to play his sport at the highest level of competition.