

## Boys of summer back on local diamonds for 2026 season

Written By Brian Lockhart

With summer approaching, local baseball diamonds are starting to see some action as teams move from pre-season training to starting the regular season schedule.

The North Dufferin Baseball League 2026 schedule got underway with the first game of the season on May 2.

The New Lowell Knights are the defending Strother Cup champions in the league's senior division.

There are 12 teams entered in the senior division this year with a 22-game regular season schedule.

In the Junior division, the Creemore Padres will be defending their 2025 championship win.

Eight teams will battle it out in the junior division this season with a regular-season schedule of 16 games.

For the Mansfield Cubs, this is somewhat of a rebuilding year as the club has added some new players and is betting on a competitive season.

Cubs coach Lance Bryan said he scouted some new local players who have experience playing competitive baseball.

"I've made four or five cuts and picked up six or seven new players," Bryan said prior to the start of the Cubs season opener against the New Lowell Knights. "I heard about the new players from buddies who were on the team last year, and they are quality players. They haven't played in a few years, but they used to play rep and travel ball, and they're looking pretty good."

Because of the wet and cool spring, baseball clubs had limited time to get out on the diamonds for pre-season training this year.

"We've been out four times," Bryan said of the Cubs' pre-season training. "We haven't been able to do too much. We had one small simulated game and went through the order. We haven't been able to do much on the mound this year because they just re-did it, and it was very soft. I think we have a better team than last year, and we've improved the quality of players."

The Cubs had their season and home opener against the New Lowell Knights on the diamond in Mansfield on Wednesday, May 6.

Bryan said he wasn't sure what to expect in the first game, but he gave the team some good direction.

"We're playing the league champions, so we'll see how it goes. I told the team I don't care what the final score is as long as we play good ball, error free, hit the ball, and don't make too many mistakes, I'll be happy with the result."

The season opener resulted in a 4-3 win for New Lowell, in a game that went six innings and was called due to low-light conditions.

The Cubs will return to their home diamond in Mansfield on Wednesday, May 20, when they will host the Owen Sound Baysox.

Game time is 6:30 p.m.