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KENT LITTLE LEAGUE: Big bats, power arms propel 10-11 All-Stars



Jordan Jones was dominant on the mound during the district tournament for Kent's 10-11 All-Stars. The Kent team will be back in action on Saturday (July 11) at the state tournament. COURTESY PHOTO/D1 Photography

By **ERICK WALKER**
 Kent Reporter Sports reporter
 Jul 16 2009, 12:21 PM · **UPDATED**

They've got plenty of power.

And the Kent 10-11 Little League All-Stars are hoping to put that power on display this weekend at Windjammer Park in Oak Harbor, where they will take part in the 13-team state tournament. Kent opens the tournament at 1 p.m. on Saturday against Salmon Creek of Vancouver.

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If Kent's show of raw power during the district tournament in the final week of June is any indication, the local group of All-Stars could be heading toward a banner tournament.

Kent took second at the state tournament a year ago and returns seven players from that team.

The combination of power and a strong group of returners has put Kent among a small handful of teams favored to win it all.

"Teams will be gunning for us," said coach Scott McGuire. "I think we're one of the teams to beat."

That became clear during the district tournament, when Kent outscored its opponents 48-26 and won four of five games.

But it wasn't necessarily the amount of runs that dropped a few jaws, but rather the way in which some of those runs were scored. Particularly the runs that came off the bat of first baseman Brakken Newcomb, who turned into a one-man wrecking crew during Kent's five-game run to the title. Newcomb led Kent past Steel Lake 13-1 in the opener by bashing a pair of home runs — one from each side of the plate — and driving in three.

"He hit one into the sticker bushes that they never did find," McGuire said.

Newcomb finished the tournament with a .571 batting average.

But he was far from alone among Kent's longball brigade. Cory Wabinga and Garrett Stewart also launched home runs in the opening win. When the tournament was all said and done, five different Kent players batted above or .500: Newcomb, Wabinga (.533), Daniel Tanaka (.538), Isaac Hegamin (.500) and Shane McGuire (.500).

Kent also received a handful of dominant performances from ace Jordan Jones during the district tournament. Jones picked up three of Kent's four wins of the tournament, collecting two victories over Steel Lake and another against Auburn. Jones' performance against Auburn was particularly impressive as he needed just 32 pitches to get through four innings.

"He had very good control," McGuire said.

McGuire is hoping Jones can continue that pinpoint command during the state tournament, a place many of the Kent players have had their eye on since the end of last season.

"Our goal, right from the start, is that we want to win it all. But (the players) know they have to have a little luck," McGuire said. "If everything goes perfect, we're going to play a week-long tournament."

SHORT HOPS

- **HEAD COACH:** Scott McGuire.
- **RECORD:** 4-1.
- **ACE ON THE HILL:** Jordan Jones, RHP. The righty has good velocity and solid control. He picked up a pair of wins at the district tournament.
- **BIG BOPPER:** Brakken Newcomb, 1b. The district tournament became Newcomb's own personal playground as he bashed three home runs in four games, including one from each side of the plate.
- **GOLD GLOVER:** Austin Taylor, left field. His running grab in the left-center gap in the championship game of the district tournament secured the title for the Kent team.

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