

11u Carolina Elite Mustangs (3 - 1, lost in semifinal)

The 11u Carolina Elite Mustangs won their first 3 games this past weekend, before dropping a tough semifinal game to the NC Stix 9 - 7.

The Mustangs opened the tournament Saturday by defeating the eventual tournament champion North Wake Nationals 9 - 5, and followed that with an 11 - 2 win over the Carolina Blue Sox. Those wins gave the Mustangs the # 2 seed entering Sunday's action, where they won their opener 6 - 4 over the Fuquay Predators before falling to the NC Stix.

13u Carolina Elite Tigers (1 - 3)

The 13u Carolina Elite Tigers played some decent baseball this past weekend considering what they were up against. The Tigers were playing "up" in the 14u age bracket, and were also without 3 of their regular players for the weekend. Considering those obstacles, I think the Tigers played some very competitive baseball over the entire weekend, including grabbing a 13 - 8 win in their opener Sunday against the Coastal Tide.

The fact that the Tigers were able to stay competitive both playing up, and without some of their regular players is really a testament to the depth of the Carolina Elite program. While it hurts whenever you are missing players (and you can't replace everything they do....if you could they wouldn't be starters in the first place), the fact is the guys behind them (or in this case younger than them - they are "call-ups" from younger teams) have really done a great job in their absence. This is true across all teams, and I am very proud of the depth in the Carolina Elite program. Good teams are made up of good players, and when you can replace players with other guys who are both good physically, and experienced mentally, the team is able to continue competing at a high level. Each weekend it seems every team is missing a few guys for one reason or another (family vacation, church commitment, etc...). However, each weekend each team is still going out and performing well on the field. That says a lot about the individual development of all the players in the program. On a small side note it says a lot about the older players willingness in practice to help the new, younger players. I've told them before - the player you are helping learn the fundamentals, and the mental skills in practice will eventually come back to help you, because he may be a "call-up" on your team. I think the guys have really bought into this in practice, because you see the veteran guys going out of their way in practice to help the rookies develop.

15u Carolina Elite Bulldogs (2 - 2)

The 15u Bulldogs split their games this past weekend, with both losses coming at the hands of a very talented Area Stars team out of Fayetteville.

The Bulldogs two wins came over the Carolina Cardinals 10 - 2 Saturday, and then a thrilling 10 - 9 walk-off win over the Raleigh Rush in their opener Sunday.

The Bulldogs (and Eagles) are a very good collection of players, and therefore they are a very competitive team (even though the team is always "different" because of the players being swapped in and out due to other weekend obligations). The area of the game the Bulldogs really struggle with are the team skills. The individual skills are pretty good (hitting, ability to field a ball, etc...). However, the "team" skills are equally important to playing winning baseball, and those are really lacking with this collection of players. It's not surprising, because many of the Bulldog players have a tough time

attending practices because of their other obligations. I do, however, hope that this upcoming summer and fall we will be able to get together more regularly to be able to work on these skills.

How to hold runners properly, defend a bunt as a team, execute a tandem relay, execute 1st and 3rd defense, and run the bases more effectively are all examples of "skills" that can win and lose you ballgames, but aren't something you can learn in a gym, or in a batting cage. They also require a well-attended practice to cover (you can't work on a tandem, or 1st and 3rd defense with 4 players).

Therefore, I want all my Bulldog and Eagle players to communicate with me regularly on their summer schedule. Mostly, I want to know when they are available (so I can schedule workouts to accommodate that). I would like to ensure that these guys are getting what they need from me in terms of their baseball development (after all that's my job). Remember guys - you still have a ton to learn about the game of baseball. Therefore, if you are really committed to becoming the best you can be, then you need to pick up the phone, or get on your computer and start communicating with me so we can get your work in - if there looks like a weeknight, or weekend time that works best for a lot of people I will certainly look to schedule a workout around that!!!