

LIC Parish Team Takes YMCA Baseball Title

Sports

BY LEONARD KLIE

THE QUEENS BOMBERS, which are affiliated with St. Patrick's parish, Long Island City, overcame a 1-6-1 season to capture the YMCA Pirate Division baseball championship in late August.

The team, which started its season in May on a rocky footing, defeated its opposition handily throughout the playoffs to lay claim to the title.

To reach the finals, the team had to dispose of the undefeated, top-seeded "A" team from the Immaculate Conception Youth Program, another Catholic parish-affiliated team. ICYP dominated league play all season and topped the Bombers in their previous meeting, 21-7. The Bombers did not want a repeat of that performance, and so they came in charged up. Led by pitcher Freddie Garcia, the Bombers jumped to an early lead and never looked back on their way to a decisive 10-5 win.

The victory earned the Bombers the right to go to the finals, where they would face Richhaven in a best-of-five series.

The first matchup was a double-header. Powered by pitcher and team captain Alex Garcia, the Bombers came from behind to win the first game, 10-8. In the second game, pitcher and batting star Joey D'Andrea fueled another come-from-behind win, 8-6.

The Bombers lost the third game, 9-5, opting to rest their top players and insuring that every member of the 21-man roster saw playoff action. The game ended prematurely when darkness fell, preventing the Bombers from another come-from-behind win.

The fourth game brought both teams to Astoria Park, the closest thing the Bombers have to a home field. Freddie Garcia returned to the mound and threw a no-hitter through the first three innings, and stopped Richhaven. The Bombers remained ahead throughout the game, which ended in a 5-4 finish.

"The young men of the St. Patrick's Bombers are an inspiration," said Tony Bellizzi, a leader of St. Patrick's youth group and one of four coaches on the championship squad. "They have demonstrated that with the combined power of



The St. Patrick's (Long Island City) Queens Bombers YMCA Baseball Age 13-14 Champions

determination, faith, perseverance, team work and a positive attitude, miracles do happen."

Joining Bellizzi as coaches were Bobby Joyce, Tom Welch and Johnny Riggins. Marie Tempesta and Sister Flora Marinelli, CSJ, who work with Bellizzi to lead the youth group, also pitched in.

All members of the team are part of the parish youth group. Some players had been together for five years, others had never played baseball before, but they never stopped practicing, especially after every defeat, Bellizzi said.

The team, made up of Alex and Freddie Garcia, D'Andrea, Brian Welch, Benjamin Vargas, Mark Zurich, Robert Vargas, Danny Vargas, Guy Espinoza, Diakel Clarke, Anthony Elias, Anthony Diomede, Hakim Hashemi, Allen Yang, Sam Texidor, Alex Jiminez, Abraham Jiminez, David Pinzon, Leon Thomas, Peter Wassef and Danny Camacho, will mark their victory with a celebration in

St. Patrick's church hall on Saturday.