

Midget Chuckers bask in Nat Bailey Stadium spotlight

BY LIISA ATVA, SPECIAL TO THE RICHMOND NEWS JUNE 22, 2012

Following in the footsteps of the Vancouver Canadians, the Richmond Chuckers got to call Nat Bailey Stadium's Scotiabank Field their home park for a recent Midget AAA baseball league encounter against the Vancouver Mounties.

With the players' names in lights on the state-of the art scoreboard, real announcers, an impeccably groomed field and all the concessions open, the crowd of 150 family and friends was treated to a night of baseball with their own boys as the stars.

The fun continued with an appearance by the Canadians' Sushi mascots, prize toss outs for all the kids and even the "kissing" camera catching a few parents in action.

It was the first time midget teams have played at Nat Bailey and the opportunity came about through Serj Sangara, Director of the Dugout Club, a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting and growing baseball in B.C.

The Dugout's relationship with the Canadians Foundation led to generously donating the use of Nat Bailey for the evening. The Dugout was also instrumental in bringing baseball to the Richmond Oval, where the Chuckers held their pre-season training.

For the Canadians organization, the game served as a dress rehearsal for the official opening day and was a way to give back to the community. "It's not just the Canadians' field it's the communities' field," said Jeff Holloway, Canadians' manager of community relations.

Nat Bailey's refurbished facilities include a Diamond Vision high definition scoreboard, second in all of North America only to the New York Mets scoreboard.

The game itself was a pitching duel with the Richmond battery of pitchers Nawid Niyaz and Jonah Rose, along with catcher Michael Yamaguchi, holding the Mounties off the scoresheet through four innings. The Mounties finally broke through in the fifth but the Chuckers answered right back with two of their own on RBI hits by Tyler Milford and Wesley Parrill to cash in Cameron Dowle and Niyaz respectively.

Vancouver managed three runs in the top of the sixth and would go on to post a 4-2 victory.

The team at Nat Bailey also included: Matt Cameron, Brendan Mullin, Blake Hogg, Michael Kinach, Niko Hill, Jonah Rose, Spencer McHattie, Brandon Kirk, Spencer Wiersma, Brett Timewell and Garret Cope.

The coaching staff features Raul Verde Rios, John Fenn and Matt Winograd.

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