

The Charlottetown Gaudet's Auto Body Islanders gather for a team photo after winning the New Brunswick Senior Baseball League (NBSBL) playoff championship at Kiwanis Park in Moncton, N.B. The Islanders defeated the Moncton Mets 6-3 to win the best-of-seven series in six games. The Islanders have won two NBSBL titles in a row, three in the last four years and four in nine years. CONTRIBUTED

A repeat performance

Charlottetown Islanders win third NBSBL championship in four years

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The Charlottetown Gaudet's Auto Body Islanders are the kings of the New Brunswick Senior Baseball League (NBSBL).

The Islanders recorded a 6-3 victory over the Moncton Mets on Sept. 25 to win the best-of-seven championship series in six games.

The Islanders became the first team to repeat as playoff champions since the Fredericton Royals completed a stretch of five consecutive titles from 2006 to 2010.

CHAMPIONSHIPS

NBSBL playoff championships won by the Charlottetown Islanders:
2024 – defeated Moncton Mets in five games.
2023 – defeated Fredericton Royals in six games.

2021 – defeated Moncton Fisher Cats in five games.
2015 – defeated Fredericton Royals in seven games.
Note: The Islanders have clinched all four championships on the road.

The Islanders have also won the NBSBL title three of the last four seasons and four in nine years, dating back to the franchise's first championship in 2015.

"This league has been going for about a hundred years (dating back to 1929) and even with that it's rare that teams repeat," Islanders head coach Doug Hines told

The Guardian in a post-game phone interview. "The fact we have a great mix of youth and some veteran guys, it's a well-run team that way.

"This team wouldn't be around without (veteran pitcher and team leader) Jake Beck. He keeps the boys together... We have a great bunch of guys, and I can't say enough about them."

BACK TO NATIONALS

As NBSBL champions, the Islanders will represent New Brunswick at the 2025 Baseball Canada national senior men's championship in Regina in August.

The Islanders went 2-2 (won/lost) and lost out on qualifying for the playoffs in a tiebreaker at the 2024 nationals.

"We started talking at the start of the playoffs, this was the Islanders' dynasty opportunity to win three out of four and throw a bronze medal at a national championship (in 2022) in there," said Beck.

"It was something we

talked about and knew it was something we would be playing for – our Islanders' dynasty.

"Obviously, we are going to look forward to the future and keep things going, but you have to cherish these moments when you get them."

GOES THE DISTANCE

Beck, the longest-continuous serving player with the Islanders since 2010, played a key role in the title-clinching win, pitching a complete game at Kiwanis Park in Moncton, N.B.

CONTINUED ON B2

A winning formula

Islanders credit team-first approach for success this season

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It takes a lot more than just strong hitting, pitching and defence to win a championship on the baseball field.

The Charlottetown Gaudet's Auto Body Islanders have found that winning formula, on and off the field.

"It was truly a team and honestly it is more than that – it's a family," Islanders pitcher Jake Beck told The Guardian in a phone interview after pitching a complete game in a 6-3 title-clinching road victory over the Moncton Mets at Kiwanis Park on Sept. 25.

The Islanders have now won back-to-back New Brunswick Senior Baseball League (NBSBL) championships, three in four years and four over a nine-year span.

But regardless of their role, first baseman Tyler Taylor called it a team win, noting every player contributed in some way.

"It was truly a team and honestly it is more than that – it's a family."

Jake Beck

"There were a few guys who didn't get a lot of playing time, but they showed up to every game and cheered all the boys on and were as big a part of this team as anybody on the field was," said Taylor. "Everybody chipped in these playoffs, and it was great to see."

DEPTH PROVIDED OPTIONS

Islanders head coach Doug Hines pointed out a big part of the Islanders' success is that team-first attitude and depth throughout a lineup featuring players from across P.E.I.

"Most of the teams in this league, you can pretty well

write their lineup; they have the same guys who have been there (for a long time) and are great players," said Hines. "With our team, I never started the same lineup twice and that's the truth.

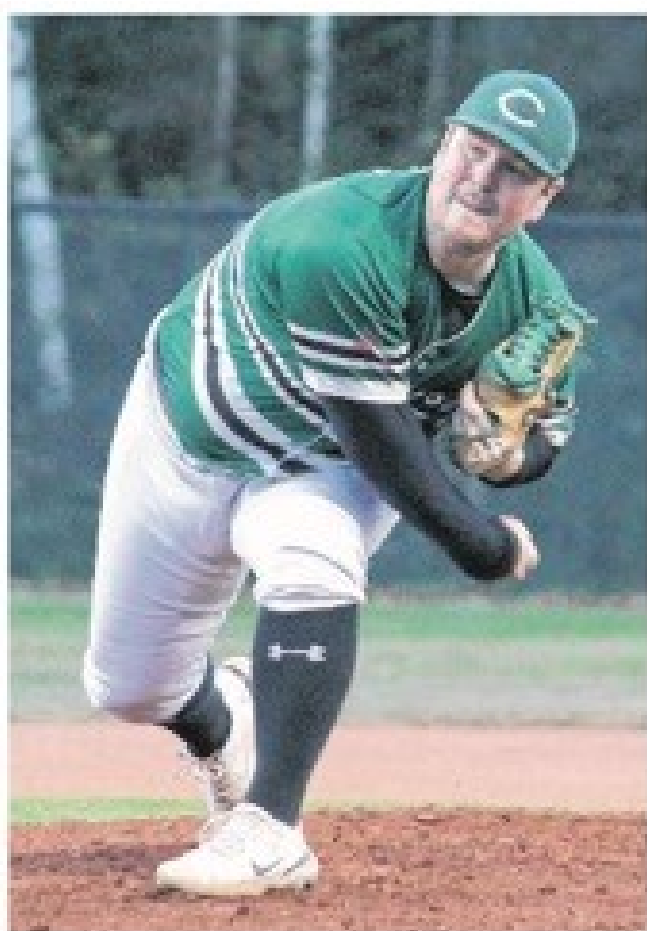
"The boys supported each other and were really good that way. We talked about the only thing that counts is winning and nobody cares who played, how much you played. At the end of the day, it was the Island team that won it."

COACHING CONTRIBUTIONS

Beck praised the efforts of Hines, who moved up from assistant coach to head coach early in the season.

"I have so much respect for what Doug has been able to do," said Beck. "He was there for us; he believed in us; we are really grateful to have Doug and his commitment to the team, and what he brings to the table is that calming presence."

CONTINUED ON B2



Charlottetown Gaudet's Auto Body Islanders pitcher and team leader Jake Beck delivers a pitch against the Moncton Mets in Game 3 of the New Brunswick Senior Baseball League (NBSBL) championship series at Memorial Field on Sept. 21. Beck pitched a complete game in a 6-3 title-clinching win in Game 6 in Moncton, N.B., on Sept. 25. BRADY MCGUAID PHOTO • SPECIAL TO THE GUARDIAN

FROM B1 A REPEAT

Beck, who gave up a three-run homer to Nick St. Pierre in the bottom of the first inning, shut the door the rest of the way.

"We got off to obviously not the start we were looking for," said Beck. "I felt I had struck the third guy out to end the inning and didn't get the call, then a base hit up the middle and then a home run and it was 3-0.

"I viewed it as a long game and this team has so much character and so much desire to do it for each other. I needed to go out and get a zero the next inning and give ourselves a chance. Thankfully, I was able to do it for the next six innings."

The crafty right-hander, who felt strong warming up in the bullpen, gave up seven hits, four walks and struck out two over seven innings.

Beck's approach, he said, included challenging hitters, making the Mets hit the ball



New Brunswick Senior Baseball League (NBSBL) president Tom O'Reilly, second left, presents the championship trophy to Charlottetown Glades' Auto Body Islanders captains Jake Beck, left, Jordan Stevenson, right, and Brody McDonald. The Islanders defeated the Moncton Mets 6-3 in the Hub City on Sept. 25 to win the best-of-seven series 4-2. CONTRIBUTED

and not giving up free bases.

"(Catcher) Cole (MacLaren) called a great game," said Beck. "I remember in the second inning, we were struggling to get outs, and I

remember thinking, 'Trust him and the pitches he puts down.'

"We went from there and were able to settle in and get in a groove. We were very

fortunate to have Cole this year - his leadership and everything he brings to the table."

OFFENCE

The Mets maintained a three-run lead through four innings. The Islanders scored two runs in the fifth, sixth and seventh innings. Scott Harper provided what proved to be the game-winning hit - a two-out single in the sixth inning - to give the Islanders a 4-3 lead.

Tyler Taylor added insurance with a two-run blast in the top of the seventh inning to close out the game's scoring.

"I was trying to sit on a fastball," said the 21-year-old Taylor, who has been part of the Islanders' last three championship teams. "It was my first at-bat of the night, so I was expecting it [after entering the game as a pinch-runner]."

MacLaren, Max Jardine and Nick MacPhail drove in the other Charlottetown runs.

Justin Cormier went the distance on the hill for the Mets, giving up 12 hits, one walk and striking out five.

EMOTIONAL WIN

The Islanders' championship-winning victory marked the team's third come-from-behind win in a row and came 24 hours after rallying from a 9-0 deficit after 4 1/2 innings to win 10-9 in an extra inning. The rally included scoring six runs in the bottom of the seventh, and four runs with back-to-back two-run singles with two outs to tie the game 9-9.

Overall, the Islanders and Mets combined to score 93 runs in the six-game series, including 77 in the last four games.

"It was a very, very emotional series," said Beck. "There were lots of big moments in the series for sure.

"I'm really proud of everybody for sticking with it and keeping on believing in themselves. It's a huge accomplishment for everybody."

FROM B1 A WINNING

"That is what we needed because we are a high-energy team; we play with a lot of emotion but at the end of the

day you still need that calming presence and that's what Doug was able to do for us this year."

Hines was quick to deflect that praise to the players and pitching and third-base coach J.P. Stevenson.

"I can't say enough (about the players); they really supported me," said Hines. "J.P. Stevenson is one of the big reasons we went as far as we did.

"He managed the pitching staff and, without him I

couldn't have done this - no way."

Taylor said what makes this edition of the Islanders a special group was the support provided to each other.

"There were a few guys who didn't get a lot of playing

time, but they showed up to every game and cheered all the boys on and were as big a part of this team as anybody on the field was," said Taylor. "Everybody chipped in these playoffs, and it was great to see."