

## PBLO EXPANDS FOR 2021, HONOURS JOHN JEPSON

The Premier Baseball League of Ontario, the first and oldest premier baseball league in Ontario, is pleased to announce its executive and board of governors have unanimously approved five new organizations to begin play in the 2021 season.

The PBLO is also honoured to announce that all its member teams will compete for the first John Jepson Memorial Championship Trophies at all age groups, beginning with the 2021 season.

“The PBLO Executive has worked very hard to keep our Premier League viable over many years, said PBLO Commissioner Linda Lewis. ”We have weathered many challenges over the years and our new additions will make our league even stronger and better.

“We will represent Ontario from the south to the north and then to the very east as well as many organizations in between.

“We are the recognized AAAA league in Ontario and I look forward to working with the new organizations as well as our long-standing members.”

New to the PBLO effective immediately are the Oshawa Legionnaires, Sudbury Voyageurs Baseball Club, Tecumseh Thunder, Oakville As and Sarnia Braves.

All five newcomers have long and rich baseball traditions in Ontario and will join long-standing PBLO members, the London Badgers, Ontario Yankees and Ottawa-Nepean Canadians, all of our organizations endeavouring to make elite baseball affordable and practical for all Ontario families and as many as 500 young men.

The league is currently planning divisions at the 15-and-under, 16-and-under and 18-and-under levels and is exploring an opportunity for a 14-and-under division in the upcoming season of play.

Regular season play will conclude with championship tournaments for the first ever John Jepson Memorial Championship Trophies, named after the legendary PBLO executive who served in many capacities, including president, before his passing in October, 2018.

Mr. Jepson was only the second individual to ever be awarded a PBLO Lifetime Achievement Award, presented to John in 2018 by the first ever recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award, legendary baseball writer Bob Elliott.

“John was the heart and soul .... and better yet the conscience of the Premier League,” said Rick Downton, secretary-treasurer of the PBLO. ”He had a way of steering things in the right direction and always had the best interests of the league as a whole, not merely his own organization.

“Youth baseball in Ontario benefitted greatly through the efforts of John and he offered invaluable influence and guidance to many coaches and executives.

“We hope the young men come to appreciate \_ if only a little \_ how much John did for baseball in Ontario through competing for our new championship trophies that will bear his name.”

The PBLO member franchises have collectively graduated more than 500 young men to college baseball in both the United States and Canada while watching over 50 of its players selected in past Major League Baseball Drafts.

The league places an emphasis on quality on-field play with exposure to professional scouts and college coaches and recruiters while also putting a heavy commitment into having its players exhibit sportsmanship, work hard on their education and be good young people away from the ballfields.

“We are really excited in having much of the province covered by our member organizations from Sudbury and Region in the North to Ottawa in the East and all the way to Tecumseh in the South and Sarnia in the West,” said PBLO president Don Campbell. “We are also solidly entrenched east of the GTA with the Yankees and Oshawa, west of the GTA in Oakville and then with our rich tradition in London.

“We really believe we are opening up new opportunities for kids in many territories of Ontario. We also hope this expanded version on the PBLO will spark interest in our league from other districts and, as such, we will entertain expansion applications into the early fall before we get to work at 2021 schedules.

“The PBLO will also have championship weekend tournaments in late July across the province where our teams will compete for a very prestigious award, the John Jepson Memorial Championship Trophies.

“No one person put more work into building the PBLO and no one person would be more proud at how the new-look PBLO looks.”