

# Saskatoon Midget Selects- Nearly A Quarter Century Of Softball Excellence

The Saskatoon Midget Selects program began in the early 1990's. One of their earliest stars was **Trevor Ethier** a member of the Sr. Men's National Team that won a bronze medal at the 2009 World Championship in Saskatoon.



In his three years with the Selects, he went to three national championships at: Napanee, Ontario in 1992, Victoria, B.C. in 1993 and the

Village of Antoine, New Brunswick in 1994. In those years the Selects played in Saskatoon's tough Special Men's Division which included the 1994 Senior Men's National Champion, **Saskatoon Rempel Brothers** as well as the three time National Junior Champions Saskatoon Eagles.



The Eagles set the tone for the Selects program as they were very successful when they were in the Midget Boy's category. They won the Midget nationals in 1991 getting dominant pitching from **Brent Hoiness**. This year marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary for the Eagles as the first winners of first ever Midget boy's title by a Saskatoon team.

In the early years the Selects were challenged every night, facing great hitters like: **Dale Dirks, Dean Holein, Rick Ruzesky, Barkley Rocheleau** and **Terry Wallin**, and at the plate having to deal with pitchers the calibre of Clint Pilon and former national team members Rob Scheller and Dean Holien. The men's teams and especially the Junior Eagles, used to hate losing to a Midget team, as the young Selects were able to beat them on more than one occasion.



The Selects program continued to produce quality teams over the next twelve years after Ethier, but couldn't quite get it done on the national stage. One huge factor in

this was the quality of teams they had to face right in their own province including a list of Midget National Champions: Midwest Spurs (1993), Prince Albert (1995 and 96), Delisle Black Sox (1998) and FSIN Whitewood in 2006.

Things came together quite nicely for the Selects in the later 2000's. Back in the Special Men's division they again faced many national teamers like Ethier and Holien who were part of the **Aspen Interiors** team that won the Sr. Men's Nationals in n 2008. After being denied a chance to go Nationals in 2006 by Softball Sask in spite of a close Provincial final game loss to the eventual national champions from Whitewood, the Selects came on strong at home in 2007. They won the 2007 Midget Boy's Provincial championship beating the defending National Champions Saskatchewan Chiefs 10 -5 in the final game, avenging a disappointing loss to them in last

year's Provincial final. After a very successful preliminary round they unfortunately lost out to the defending champs and were forced to accept a bronze medal. That squad featured a trio of players who went on the win a silver medal at the Junior Men's World Championship in White Horse: pitchers **Devon McCullough**, **Travis Dauvin** and catcher **Derek Arsenie**.



The following year in Brandtford they were ready to atone for that loss. The Selects had a deep pitching staff featuring the likes of McCullough and Dauvin as well as **Patrick Burns**. They enjoyed another very successful preliminary round going undefeated and when the rains prevented the finishing of the playoff round they were officially crowned national champions. They were one of 4 Saskatoon teams to win a Canadian Championship that year.

The Selects were anxious to return to nationals the next year. Not only were they returning as defending champions but they had a chance to play in Prince Albert after being denied to a chance to play there in 2006. Led in the circle and also at the plate by McCullough, the Selects won it all again beating out the last team to win Gold at Nationals. In the gold-medal match, they defeated the Sooke Blue Sox of British Columbia 7-0 in six innings. Saskatoon pitcher Devon McCullough threw a complete game one-hitter, and drove in his team's fifth and sixth runs. He was also named the tournament's top player.

Although it has not had a national champion since 2008, things are looking up for the Selects boys program as the Midget category has moved to under 18 from under 19. After having a great preliminary round last year, but disappointing in the playoff round, they are looking forward to playing in front of a home crowd with an experienced squad who has done very well in league play. Much like the last time Midget Nationals were Saskatoon, the team will have good representation on the Junior Men's National Team. Pitcher Jordan Hudson and third baseman Evan Morris will be part of the squad that will go to Worlds in Midland Michigan starting on July 24<sup>th</sup>.

