

The 2023 Rapids season will be one that will be remembered for a long time. The 9th season of Rapids baseball ended with a trip to the NYCBL Western Division Championship series where they fell to the Olean Oilers. However, In the opening round of the playoffs, the Rapids picked up their first playoff win since 2017 with a 6-5 thriller over the Dansville Gliders.

In the regular season, Genesee finished with a record of 19-23. The 19 regular season wins were the most for a Rapids team since 2017. Offensively, five Rapids finished the summer batting over .300. Aidan Stern (Freshman at Trinity College) led the team in average batting .368. Rion Kojima (Sophomore at Genesee Community College) and Eli MacDonald (Senior at Indiana Tech) both hit .364. Spencer Crane (Senior at Ohio Christian University) hit .328 and Eli Huebner (Sophomore at Meridian Community College) batted .320. Stern (8th), Kojima (T-10th) and MacDonald (T-10th) all finished in the top 10 of batting average for the New York Collegiate Baseball League. Kojima was the team leader with 59 hits which actually placed him second nationally in collegiate summer leagues. Spencer Crane was tied with Eli MacDonald for the team lead with 5 HR and Crane was the team leader for RBI with 33. One of the highlights of the summer occurred on July 20th when Crane hit 2 grand slams and picked up 8 RBI in a game at Olean. Rion Kojima, Eli MacDonald and Spencer Crane were all named to the postseason All-NYCBL Team.

On the mound, the Rapids were led by James Ross (Sophomore at Calvin College) who had 4 wins and 2 saves while Owen Clark (Junior at Midway University) was the team leader for strikeouts with 41 placing him 3rd overall in the league. Before suffering an injury, Konrad Kisch (Senior at Bemidji State University) was 2-0 with a 4.50 ERA and 16 strikeouts.

New this summer, the NYCBL participated in the National Association of College Summer Baseball's Prospect Games at Liberty University. Leagues from across the East Coast of the United States participated in the two-day event. The Rapids were represented in this game by OF Ka'ala Tam who will be entering his Junior year at Oregon Tech.

Houghton University and the Genesee Rapids were the hosts of the annual NYCBL All-Star Game. Seven Rapids were named members of the Western Division All-Stars: Rion Kojima, Dalton Cody, Spencer Crane, Ka'ala Tam, Ethan Cetton, Owen Clark and Konrad Kisch. The event was a huge success with the evening ending with a fireworks show sponsored by READY Water after a 4-1 win by the Eastern Division.

Another highlight of this season was the annual Kids' Day Game. Over 1,000 fans were in attendance including students from six different schools. The day was sponsored by Armstrong One Wire and our volunteers provided so many fun activities for everyone there. Armstrong continued to be a major sponsor of the Rapids sponsoring the "Armstrong Player of the Game" after every home game. In total, the Rapids had over 40 different sponsors that helped this season be such a success.

Another important part of the success of the Rapids each year are the host families that open up their homes and lives to making the young men who come each summer feel welcome

and a part of the community. A huge thank you also goes to the community for your continued support of the Rapids. This year, our record attendance allowed us to be the league leader for attendance. So many players and parents also commented on how welcomed they felt.

The mission of the Genesee Rapids is to present to baseball players, coaches, and all whom they influence, the challenge and adventure of living for Jesus Christ in a needy world, through the game of baseball. One of the ways this mission is met is through intentional sharing of the gospel and God's truths through weekly Bible study. Paul Shea, retired Assistant Pastor of Houghton Wesleyan Church, and Alex Wright, Assistant Professor of Management Business Administration at Houghton University, were this year's team chaplains. Throughout the summer, they challenged the team to grow in their faith and understanding of God's love for them through His son, Jesus Christ, in their study of John. Many of the team members expressed appreciation for the studies and how they helped them grow closer in their relationship with God.

As we look back at the 2023 season with great memories, it is not too soon to look ahead. 2024 will mark the 10th anniversary season of the Genesee Rapids. We hope to see you at the ballpark as we celebrate next summer!