

## Team will travel to opener in Haxtun, Colo., Sunday

**By Jan Schultz**

***The Imperial Republican***

Imperial's wood bat baseball team, Imperial "Crush," plays in its first game of the 2009 season this Sunday, May 31, with a 5 p.m. game in Haxtun, Colo.

The team is competing for a second year in the Nebraska Baseball Association League, which has wood bat teams in communities all across the state.

Crush's first home game at Campbell Park will be played Sunday, June 14, when they host North Platte.

Matt Jablonski of Imperial is serving as player/coach for the "Crush" again this season.

However, Jablonski won't be seeing much action on the field for the first five to six weeks this summer, after breaking his hand in an accident at his home last Thursday.

He was working on his garage door when the accident happened. After an initial exam at Chase County Community Hospital, he underwent surgery in North Platte, and returned home Friday.

With a roster of 15 players this season, Jablonski said he's planning on having enough players to fill the void. He'll just keep score the first few games, he said.

One of the changes in the rules this year allows some use of aluminum bats at those fields that have longer distances to the fence. Games at Imperial's field will still require wood bats, Jablonski said.

Most of last year's players are back after finishing 8-6 in the 2008 season.

Returners include Darrin Schultz, Scott Way, Lance Milner, Jeremy Mathews, Sean Munger, Eric McDaniel, Carl Zuege, Marc Mroczek, Jerel Fortkamp, Dustin Weiss and Jablonski.

Newcomers on the roster are Derek Russell, Calvin Weiss, Cody Jantz, Lucas Jablonski and Alex Sharp. Sharp will play after the conclusion of the Legion baseball season.

Jablonski said he's putting in a bid for Imperial to host this year's district tournament in early August.

### **Imperial Crush 2009 schedule**

All home games at Campbell Park

- May 31—At Haxtun, Colo., 5 p.m.
- June 7—At Sidney
- June 14—North Platte, here
- June 21—Kimball, here
- June 28—At Scottsbluff
- July 5—Haxtun, here
- July 12—Sidney, here
- July 19—At North Platte

- July 26—At Kimball
- Aug. 2—Scottsbluff, here
- Aug. 9—District tourney starts
- Aug 16-17—State tournament

Game times are still being finalized. Check The Imperial Republican each week for starting times.