

Guyanese is draft pick for Blue Jays

By Gerald V. Paul

History may very well be in the making as a young man of Guyanese heritage, the top Canadian College player, was selected in the seventh round of the June Toronto Blue Jays draft.

"I played house league, then select and then it was like, wow, I might have a chance at this sport," an excited Jonathan Baksh said.

Baksh, who played minor peewee for the Mississauga Majors, made his mark with 100 hits for a .469 average -- placing him 5th nationally in Division II -- 21 doubles, four triples, nine homers and 67 RBIs.

He enrolled at the Florida Tech University and while in the United States, he earned first-team All-South region honours for

the second year in a row. He was named a second-team Division II All-American.

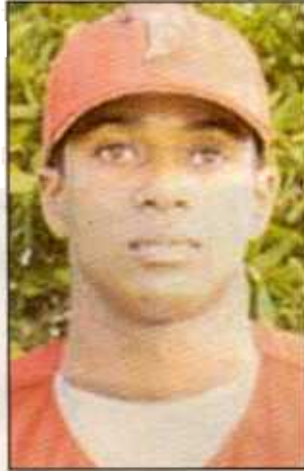
After learning he was a seventh round pick by the Blue Jays, Baksh celebrated with his mother Indrani, and brother Brandon, 11, at the family's Mississauga home.

"I was really hoping to go there," the outfielder said. "I was just ecstatic. That's what I was hoping for. You couldn't have asked for anything better than that."

His current coach at Florida Tech, Paul Knight, said: "It's a great opportunity for him. He deserves it. He worked hard for it."

Legendary Florida Tech coach Les Hall said Baksh went higher than any player ever drafted out of the university.

The first person of



JONATHAN BAKSH

Guyanese heritage to be selected for the Blue Jays -- and for any Major League Baseball team as far as it can be determined -- Baksh has not yet discussed money with his new employers.

He said, however, that he expects the Jays to allow him to complete his degree at Florida Tech.