

Trio slugging it out for the top

By Jarrod Potter

TEEMING with baseball talent, three local up-and-coming baseball stars have been chosen to represent Victoria in the upcoming National Championships.

Lachie Madden 15, from Pakenham, Will Day 13, from Maryknoll and Jesse Hunter 12, from Pakenham, were all chosen to play for Victoria after trying out for the team over the last few weeks.

Madden is excited to play for the Victorian under-16 blue team and fulfil one of his baseball dreams.

"I felt pretty good actually," Madden said on being chosen for Victoria. "It was one of my goals, so I've achieved one of my really big goals."

Madden is a pitcher for Cheltenham, with a fastball around 82 miles per hour (132 km/h), having moved to the team after a couple of seasons with the Berwick Cougars.

It's a pretty meteoric rise for Madden, having taken up the sport only a few years ago.

"I got into baseball about three years ago," Madden said.

"My dad got me into it... he's been playing it for about thirty years.

"Had a throw with him and I just loved it."

Madden's under-16 blue team play their championships in Geelong in January next year.

Day and Hunter will play in the under-14 team who are flying off to Perth next year for their main event.

Day said he picked up the sport after finding some of his mum's old softball equipment and the passion grew from there.

"My mum has played softball for about twenty years and she had a lot of gloves at home and I picked them up and had a throw with dad and had fun throwing," Day said.

"Probably when I reached up to the under-14s I found out the Vic tryouts were happening, so my goal was to at least get into the squad of 36. But then I got into that and ended up getting chosen for the White team so that was good."

Day dabbles with a lot of different positions on the field, from outfield to baseman to relief pitcher, but he's just happy having a go at anything.

"I'm a bit of an all rounder," Day said. "Play a fair bit round the outfield in pretty much any position. Used to play a

bit of first base, but now I'm mainly playing third but they're now getting me for relief pitcher, so I'm just having a go at that."

"I've always liked outfield, but I'm starting to enjoy my pitching so that's fun."

Hunter found the love of the game like the other boys, through his parents. "My dad played midgets when he was about 12-13 and he had an old catching glove in the back of his shed," Hunter said.

"I asked dad 'what's this' and he showed me what it was and we started throwing."

"We came down to tryouts at Pakenham Pumas and then I played here for a season in winter."

"For summer I went to Berwick Cougars and then I went to Dandenong the next year and now I'm at Berwick Cougars."

Hunter plays in the infield but is a known slugger around Berwick and Dandenong baseball circles, having hit a .819 batting average last season.

While the process to get in the side was hard for Hunter and the other two boys, he said the best way to achieve your goals is through determination and



Will Day, Lachie Madden and Jesse Hunter are all getting ready to represent Victoria in the upcoming National Baseball Championships in January. 74509
Picture: Jarrod Potter

hard work.

"It was hard," Hunter said on getting into the team. "You have to keep work-

ing and keep fighting to get your goals and you'll succeed."