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Frustrated Majors romp

Mon, June 5, 2006

Upset by what was felt to be a wasted trip to Barrie, London clubs the Nats.By **RYAN PYETTE**, FREE PRESS SPORTS REPORTER

The London Majors are mad at the Intercounty Baseball League champion Barrie Baycats -- so they took out their frustrations on the cellar-dwelling Stratford Nationals.

Upset at having to travel all the way to Barrie Saturday to find out their doubleheader was cancelled by rain, first-place London returned home and punched up a quick five runs in the first inning en route to a 12-0 drubbing of Stratford yesterday at Labatt Park.

London second baseman Kyle Piwowarczyk went three-for-five with two doubles, including a bases-clearing shot to right centre in the eighth inning that turned a 7-0 lead into a 10-0 laughter. The former London Knights forward also scored three runs and stole three bases.

"That was a pain driving all the way to Barrie when we already knew it was going to rain," Piwowarczyk said. "We did what we had to do (against Stratford). We scored early and gave our pitchers something to work with."

Venezuelan import lefty Erick Perez improved to 5-0 on the season by throwing six shutout innings and striking out four while limiting the Nationals to four hits and a walk. He had the

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stuff to go more but London (8-1) had a pitching backup because of the cancelled doubleheader in Barrie, where the Baycats had planned to hand out their 2005 championship rings.

"A ring ceremony, you can do any time," Majors manager Roop Chanderdat said. "I let the (Intercounty) league know how I felt. We're the furthest teams in the league from east to west and there was a 70-per-cent chance of rain. We're a small-budget team. But I understand Barrie was pumping up the games as the battle for first place. They wanted to play."

London third baseman Pete Babcock picked up a double and single and two RBIs while designated hitter Chuck Roberts added two RBIs on a single and a sacrifice fly to drop Stratford to 0-9 and ruin manager Shawn Gillespie's return to London, where he was the GM last year.

"I was looking forward to this one," Gillespie said. "London has some good pitching but it's hard to say where they rank. There's about four good teams in the league and they're in that mix. Our problem right now is we don't have many veterans. We're still making too many errors in the field and we're not hitting but we're not out of it. We have to string together some wins but I feel this team can still take a run at the playoffs."

Stratford starter Simon Liston, a London native, was tagged for six runs -- five earned -- and eight hits in five innings. He walked three and struck out two.

The Majors ran at will against Stratford's pitchers and catcher Will Richards in racking up six stolen bases without anyone caught.

"That's something we're trying to do," Piwowarczyk said. "We're trying to create some runs. It's nice that we're off to a good start instead of starting slow and having to scuffle at the end to make the playoffs. But there's still a long way to go and we have no intention of letting up."

GAME GLANCE

London 12, Stratford 0

Majors: LHP Erick Perez (5-0) 2B Kyle Piwowarczyk, 3-for-5, 3 RBIs, 3 runs scored, 3 stolen bases.

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Nationals: 2B Vince Burke, 3-for-3, 1 BB.

Next: London plays host to the Kitchener Panthers Friday night at 7:30 p.m. and the Guelph Royals Sunday at 1 p.m. at Labatt Park.

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SPORTS NEWS

Hingis continues comeback

Martina Hingis won a winner-take-all set Monday to complete a suspended match, beating Shahar Peer 6-3, 2-6, 6-3 for the final berth in the women's quarter-finals at the French Open. Hingis' opponent Tuesday will be two-time runner-up Kim Clijsters.

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