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Majors oust Baycats

Wed, August 16, 2006

By **RYAN PYETTE**, FREE PRESS SPORTS REPORTER

For the second time in three years, the London Majors are back in the Intercounty Baseball League championship series.

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The Majors knocked out defending league champion Barrie -- and avenged last year's first-round defeat at the hands of the Baycats -- in five games in a semifinal series that was capped by last night's 7-2 victory at Barrie's Metals Stadium.

Barrie had been the best regular-season team in Intercounty ball this summer with a 26-10 record, but ran into a London buzz saw that finished fourth with a 21-15 mark and is now 8-1 in the playoffs.

London starting pitcher Josh Palmer went the distance and outduelled Barrie ace Angus Roy, who was brought back on short rest and also pitched a complete game -- only to lose for the second time in the series.

Down 1-0 in the third inning, London's Chuck Roberts blasted a three-run homer to give Palmer all the run support he would need.

London will face the winner of the Toronto-Brantford semifinal, which Brantford leads 3-1 after a 9-4 win last night. Game 5 is tonight in Toronto at Christie Pits.

The Majors lost the 2004 final to the Guelph Royals.

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"It's a validation of all the hard work this team has put in this year," said London owner Scott Dart. "We're very happy to be going back to the final. It's what it takes to rekindle interest in baseball in London."

In a true test of team depth, London played its first game without shortstop Mike Ambrose and Brad McElroy, the league's top hitter, as both headed back to school at North Carolina-Charlotte. Pitcher Hiarali Garcia has also departed for East Oklahoma State.

London won't be able to set the schedule for the final series until the conclusion of the Brantford-Toronto series.

MAJORS 7

BAYCATS 2

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Majors oust Baycats

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