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Majors take two from Baycats

Mon, June 19, 2006

By **ERIC BENDER**, FREE PRESS SPORTS REPORTER

Booming bats and a couple of solid pitching performances vaulted the London Majors over last year's Intercounty Baseball League champion Barrie Baycats yesterday at Labatt Park.

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The Majors improved to a 12-3 record by taking both ends of a doubleheader, 7-5 and 11-2. Coming in a half-game behind Barrie, the Majors lowered the Baycats record to 11-5.

"We won the games the way we wanted to," said first baseman Simon Galarraga, who crushed home runs in each game, the second being a grand slam.

The Majors veteran explained that the wins were convincing and showcased all the talents of the Majors in hitting, defence, speed and pitching.

Yesterday's doubleheader was important to both teams in the tight Intercounty race. The Majors win boosted their fortunes, while those of the Baycats dropped. The Toronto Maple Leafs who went into the weekend barely ahead of Barrie, London and Guelph had been sitting at 12-3.

The Baycats came in to London with a four-game winning streak. The Majors have won three straight. They began the season 6-0.

Venezuelan import Erick Perez picked up his sixth win without a loss, hurling a complete seven-inning first game and limiting

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the Baycats to seven hits. One of the hits was off the bat of third baseman Jordan Lundberg, who put Barrie up 3-0 in the fourth inning with a three-run homer. However, Galarraga cut the lead to 3-2 in the bottom of the fourth with a two-run blast.

In the bottom of the fifth, centrefielder Brad McElroy gave Perez the win with a two-run homer that propelled the Majors into a 6-4 lead.

Majors field manager and co-owner Roop Chanderdat said the Perez win was impressive because he had pitched just three days earlier.

Chanderdat was pleased with the work of role players such as Ryan Gauthier, four hits on the afternoon with one RBI, and Jonathan Binder, two hits and one RBI, who stepped up with timely contributions. But it was the hunch he had that paid big dividends yesterday. "I had a hunch about Simon," he said. "He was batting seventh and I moved him into the five hole. Look what happened."

"We showed we can hit and support our pitchers," said Galarraga who had eight RBIs among the 23 Majors hits on the day. "Barrie is one tough cat and we can show we're consistent."

Infielder Kyle Piwowarczyk, who has an uncanny knack of getting on base when he doesn't get a hit, had just one hit in five at-bats but crossed the plate three times in his afternoon's work.

Third baseman Pete Babcock had four hits and two RBIs.

The Majors overcame a 2-0 first inning deficit in the second game with Josh Palmer, a Majors rookie, on the mound. He had the game gift wrapped around an 11-2 lead when he left after the sixth inning. He struck out four, walked two and gave up seven hits. Jeff Roy and Ted Kalnins combined to blank the Baycats in the seventh.

The Majors play the Royals in Guelph Tuesday to meet the Royals, one of the three teams to beat London this season.

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