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### Majors' batty over returnees

Mon, May 15, 2006

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

The misfortunes of two London players helped the London Majors to a 7-6 victory over the Brantford Red Sox yesterday at Labatt Park.

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Centre fielder Brad McElroy smashed a sixth-inning leadoff homer over the right-field fence for the Majors' seventh run, which proved to be the winner, and DH Chuck Roberts went four-for-five with three RBIs.

The Majors are 3-0 in the Intercounty Baseball League.

It's unfortunate for McElroy and Roberts personally that they were in Labatt Park yesterday -- but fortunate for the Majors.

McElroy, who played for the Majors last year, was attending Kellogg Community College. His school team was tied for first in its conference but had to forfeit a string of games because a suspended player kept playing through a misunderstanding.

"We dropped to second last and didn't go to regionals," said McElroy. "That's why I'm here so soon." He returned on the weekend.

Roberts came back to his native London, where he'd come up through the Badgers organization, when he couldn't get a work permit to continue his front-office job with the Houston Astros' Class A team in Salem, Va.

Roberts graduated in 2004 from Tusculum College in Greenville, Tenn., where he went on a baseball scholarship. He hadn't played since taking the minor league job.

"I couldn't get married down there. I didn't have a serious enough relationship," he grinned.

Marrying an American may have saved his job. Instead, he's back looking for work and slugging at a torrid pace, going three-for-three in the opener last week.

London might have been 4-0 if not for a rainout of the second game of a doubleheader in Oshawa Saturday.

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After the Majors, behind the pitching of Tom Van Kastern and the hitting of Oswaldo Troconis beat the Dodgers 3-1 in the first game, pitcher Josh Palmer had the Majors firmly in command in the nightcap when a downpour hit before it was a complete game.

"We had a game taken away from us," said Majors field boss Roop Chanderdat, "and now we have to go down there again."

Saturday was the Majors' only scheduled visit to Oshawa as the extreme eastern and western IBL teams play home-and-home doubleheaders to cut travel costs.

Venezuelan import lefty Erick Perez picked up his second win yesterday, going seven innings, giving up four runs on nine hits, striking out four and walking two.

Reliever Mike Mitro retired the Red Sox in the top of ninth after allowing Brantford to tighten it with two runs in the eighth.

The Majors were up 5-0 after two.

Shortstop Kyle Piwowarczyk, hit by a pitch in the first inning, moved up on a Pete Babcock single, then scored when Roberts drilled a shot through the legs of Brantford pitcher Stefan Streker and and into centre.

The Majors added four more in the bottom of the second when left-fielder Ryan Gauthier singled home catcher Chad McKellar, who had walked to begin the inning. A Brantford error loaded the bases for Babcock, who sacrificed Gauthier in. A Roberts' single to right scored McElroy and Piwowarczyk.

The Majors have a three-game homestand next weekend, playing Hamilton Friday at 7:30 p.m., then a doubleheader against Oshawa on Victoria Day at 1 p.m.

MAJORS 7

RED SOX 6

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