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# The London Free Press

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## SPORTS OTHER SPORTS

### Mitro will fight fear, mistakes

Sat, August 1, 2009

By RYAN PYETTE

The Toronto Maple Leafs hitters can flat-out rake.

Their home diamond, Christie Pits, is a lyric little bandbox, one of the easiest parks in the Intercounty Baseball League to hit a home run.

"It isn't," London Majors starting pitcher Mike Mitro observed, "what you'd call a pitcher's ball park by any stretch."

But it will surely be Mitro, who went 3-0 by winning one game in each playoff round during London's magic run to the league final last year, on the mound tomorrow afternoon for the visitors in their playoff opener against a fearsome Leafs lineup.

There were other options for series-opening starter. Young lefty Craig Bate went 5-1 with a miniscule earned-run average to lead London this season. Pierre Miville-Deschenes threw four complete games and Hiarali Garcia, Josh Palmer and Adam Echlin are always candidates.

But Majors manager Roop Chanderdat said Mitro, his trustworthy arm, never lets him down.

"I didn't pitch against Toronto this year, but I've pitched enough to them in the past and watched them against us to know how good they are at the plate," said the 29-year-old Mitro, now in his sixth season with London. "They feed off mistakes. You look to see where there might be a weakness in their lineup and they really don't have one."

"There's no margin for error, but you can't let fear rule you."

This will be no rattled rook on the hill. This is an established big-situation pitcher.

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In his final regular season tuneup, Mitro tossed seven strong innings in Mississauga and limited the Twins to three unearned runs.

"The guys have played hard behind me because they know I'm going to give it everything I have any time I get the ball and the way I look at it, my job is to give this team a chance to be up 1-0 in the series," Mitro said. "(Catcher) Mason Reilly has said to me when my stuff's on, it's just about unhittable. I don't know about that, but Mason's a great guy and we trust each other out there.

"That's why I said right to his face, 'Mason, you're my personal catcher. If you're not behind the dish, I'm not throwing.'"

Mitro remains a hungry man, a pitcher who threw a gem in memory of his grandfather and uncle against Brantford in Game 5 of the IBL final last August to put London one victory away from their first title in nearly 35 years.

But the Red Sox won the final two, including Game 7 before a jammed Labatt Park.

"I want one ring," Mitro said. "We've been through a lot as a team, but we've come together (11-3 in their final 14 games). Personally, I needed to take some time this year. I had some family turmoil that took me away for a while but I knew I'd be back at the park. My girlfriend was a great help. It's how you pick yourself up when you get knocked down that counts.

"When the team calls on me, I'll take the ball and do what needs to be done. . ."

He's willing and able to set the table for another long playoff run.

"Guys like Mitro, Kyle Piwowarczyk, Vince Burke, they know what it takes to get to the final," Chanderdat said. "Everything is magnified in the playoffs and they're the ones to lead the younger guys. Toronto finished very strong this year and so did we. We just have to be ready to match them run for run."

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Intercounty playoffs

London Majors (21-15) vs. Toronto Maple Leafs (24-12)

What: Best-of-seven quarterfinal

Game 1: Tomorrow, 1 p.m. at Toronto's Christie Pits

Game 2: Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. at Labatt Park

Game 3: Wednesday, 7:30 p.m. at Toronto

Game 4: Friday, 7:30 p.m. at Labatt Park

Game 5: Aug. 8, 1 p.m. at Toronto, if necessary

Game 6: Aug. 9, 1 p.m. at Labatt Park, if necessary

Game 7: Aug. 10, 7:30 p.m. at Toronto, if necessary

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- [Jays trade Rolan, keep Halladay](#)
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SPORTS NEWS


**Hill's two-run swat helps Jays dump A's**  
 Aaron Hill hit a two-run homer and the Toronto Blue Jays roughed up Vin Mazzaro in a 7-2 victory over the Oakland Athletics on Sunday.

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- Indy 500 winner Kenny Brack takes X Games rally racing gold in debut
- Timberwolves owner Glen Taylor expects decision on new head coach soon
- Greg Norman suffers through another Sunday fall at U.S. Senior Open
- Mets activate Gary Sheffield

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