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Cattrysse's renewed passion on display

INTERCOUNTY BASEBALL

By MORRIS DALLA COSTA, THE LONDON FREE PRESS

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London Majors pitcher Jordi Amargos rears back to deliver to the plate during the first inning against the Kitchener Panthers in an Intercounty Baseball League game at Labatt Park on Tuesday night. Amargos picked up the win, going seven innings in a 10-1 victory. (SUE REEVE, The London Free Press)

There are few things as satisfying as finding something you loved after you thought it was lost permanently.

It makes the bond stronger.

When it comes to love of the game, it leads to a renewed sense of purpose and passion.

The results usually reflect that passion.

London Majors' Alan Cattrysse is enjoying the game of baseball again and his numbers reflect it.

Going into Tuesday's game at Labatt Park against the Kitchener Panthers, Cattrysse was second in the Intercounty Baseball League, batting .419.

He's running, playing great defence and giving manager Roop Chanderdat an insurance policy that allows him to play Cattrysse wherever he needs to.

Cattrysse is enjoying the game so much he's moved to London from Chatham so he can get involved with the team as much as possible. Usually a slow starter, the change of address helped Cattrysse get off to a quicker start.

"The last couple of years I was disappointed in how I started," he said. "I moved to London in December so I got to hit through the winter at Centrefield Sports and I lifted a little more in the offseason. It let me add a little muscle that I'll keep through the season."

Cattrysse is one of those remarkable athletes. He was a terrific basketball player and went to Michigan State on a baseball scholarship.

But baseball became a chore in university and that's when he fell out of love with the game. It took him a while to even want to play again. But he eventually came back and it's obvious baseball has become fun again. He's relaxed, comfortable and wants to come to the park every day.

"(Baseball is) the main reason I moved here," he said. "Baseball has become the priority. It's way too much fun playing with these guys. Coming here it's like you are a little kid again. There's not that stress day in and day out with coaches being on you every day because their job is on the line. It's a good stress-free environment because it allows you to play to your ability."

"It's a lot of fun."

He's been able to produce. In his first two at bats against the Panthers he showed aggressiveness and patience. He singled with two out, stole a base and later scored and then walked with two out in his second at-bat.

Cattrysse now considers himself a veteran and that too has made him feel more comfortable.

"You know what to expect for the season. Now you're not surprised. I know the pitchers. I know the pitches that are coming. The last couple of years, they've been coming after me with breaking balls and that's something I remember. I'm looking for it and now because I am stronger, I am able to adjust if it's a fastball."

Bulking up has helped him in that respect.

"I worked hard in the gym in the offseason," he said. "This year I got up to 205 pounds before the season started, usually I'm at 195 pounds when it starts and I lose about 10 pounds. I have a little bit more strength there."

Cattrysse is one of those nice guys you'd like to see do well.

Chanderdat says Cattrysse could be in for a banner season.

"Usually he starts slowly and he's digging his way out of hitting .200 when he gets hot after the all-star game," Chanderdat said. "But this year he's already hitting .300 and he's really starting to get hot."

Cattrysse plays hard and that usually means he picks up a lot of niggles during the season. Not wanting to put the team in a hole, he'd often try to play through those issues.

"But with the depth we have on this team, we have guys that can step in and play," he said. "Roop uses me as a designated hitter which also helps. I've been a designated hitter more this year than ever."

But it doesn't matter what he does, it seems all good.

That's what happens when the passion returns.

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GAME GLANCE

Majors 10, Panthers 1

Keys: Majors had 18 hits, including home runs by Josh Federico and Tyler Graham. Graham's shot landed on Riverside Drive. He added a double. Federico also had two singles. Cleveland Brownlee had three hits, including two triples. Chris Chambers had three hits, Alan Cattrysse had two hits and two walks along with two stolen bases.

Pitching: Jordi Amargos went seven innings for the win to run his record to 6-1. He gave up six hits, five of them infield hits.

Crazy schedule: The Majors play in Kitchener on Thursday and Friday, travel to Barrie for a doubleheader Saturday and are at Labatt Park Sunday against the Brantford Red Sox in their second-last home game of the regular season, a 1 p.m. start.

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