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Majors look to bounce back

Fri, July 27, 2007

By RYAN PYETTE, FREE PRESS SPORTS REPORTER

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The London Majors didn't score in the first game of their Intercounty Baseball League quarter-final at Brantford on Wednesday.

Cracking that goose egg won't get easier -- not with the guys the Red Sox plan to march out to the mound for Games 2 and 3.

On the heels of a 13-0 thrashing at Arnold Anderson Stadium, Tillsonburg's Mike Meyers, the former Chicago Cubs farmhand who pitched at the triple-A level for the Milwaukee Brewers affiliate in Nashville last year, gets the start tonight at 7:30 p.m. at Labatt Park.

Back in Brantford tomorrow, it's Wyoming's Brett Gray -- he of the 25 strikeouts fame when he pitched for the Frontier League's London Werewolves.

"We's been through this before. We got beat 14-0 in the first game (of the IBL final against Brantford) last year and we felt we were pretty competitive the rest of the series," London manager Roop Chanderdat said of the series Brantford won in five games.

"I just told the guys a loss is a loss and it doesn't matter if it's 3-2 or 13-0. You just have to bounce back. They have some good pitchers but so do we. We just have to get some timely hits."

On Wednesday, the Majors couldn't dent Red Sox starter Brad Hogeterp, the veteran lefty named playoff MVP last year. London had just five hits but drew four walks in seven innings off him, missing an early opportunity.

"We had runners on second and third with only one out and couldn't cash in," Chanderdat said. "They had a run in the first, three in the third and four in the fourth and by then, I had most of the starters out of there."

London ace Tom Van Kasteren surrendered eight runs in four innings. Majors hurler Kirk Martin is expected to take the mound tonight opposite Meyers, who

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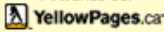
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selected to play for Brantford despite overtures from many of the other clubs in the league.

"You're always interested in a guy like that," Chanderdat said. "We knew going in this would be a tough series. They (Brantford) don't have any holes in their lineup and we've been missing Karl Almonite, who has pneumonia, and that's hurt us on offence because he's a good hitter."

The London manager, who led the IBL all-stars to a victory over the Sox earlier this month, also blamed the infield at Anderson Stadium for a couple of bad hops on critical plays.

"There have been some bad bounces there this year and that didn't help us," Chanderdat said. "Maybe they're used to it more than our guys but they had a couple, too, and managed to get their gloves on them. That's just the way it works."

The Majors, who finished 15-21, found out late Monday night they would be facing Brantford in the first round after the second-place Red Sox dropped their final game of the regular schedule to Hamilton. The Thunderbirds finished sixth, a game ahead of London, and drew the Kitchener Panthers in the first round.

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