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Springer bounces from Jet Box to Majors

INTERCOUNTY BASEBALL: A work transfer brought the 27-year-old to London

By MORRIS DALLA COSTA, THE LONDON FREE PRESS

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London Majors first baseman Chris Chambers smacks a fly ball to centre field in the second inning of their Intercounty Baseball League game against the Burlington Twins at Labatt Park on Tuesday. (DEREK RUTTAN, The London Free Press)

Adwin Springer wasn't sure what he was going to do.

The 27-year-old from Toronto had played competitive baseball pretty much all his life.

The last three years while working in the Windsor area, he'd spent playing for Michigan Jet Box, one of the most successful senior baseball teams in the United States.

Then Springer got transferred by his company to London and while he tried to continue playing for Jet Box, the travelling was simply too much.

"I still wanted to play at a level that was the same or even more competitive," Springer said. "I'd talked to Roop a couple of times, but still wasn't sure. Then I came to the game on Sunday and that decided it for me.

"I knew a few of the guys. It was exciting. I wanted to be a part of it."

Roop is Roop Chanderdat the manager of the Intercounty Baseball League London Majors. The Sunday Springer was talking about was last Sunday when the Majors defeated the Burlington Twins 12-4. That performance was enough to convince anyone about the highly competitive

nature of the Majors.

"It sure puts a lot of pressure on you to hit," Springer laughed. "Then again, there's always pressure."

Springer was in the Majors' lineup Tuesday when the Twins were back in town for a makeup game.

"I just signed him (Tuesday)," Chanderdat said. "He played with a lot of these players and knows them."

The Majors have begun to show a propensity to pound the ball, but they can always use another bat.

The Majors are still waiting for a number of players to come from college baseball.

Playing with the Jet Box has given Springer a solid background with pressure situations.

Springer played at Wayne State in Detroit, Intercounty, the Valley League in Virginia. He has been around and played a lot of baseball.

Paul LaMantia who had a great start to the season with a pair of homers left for Florida Tuesday. He got the call to attend a free agent tryout.

"We like to help out all our players like that," Chanderdat said.

Springer has never signed a pro contract with an organization.

"But like everyone, you have a lot of tryouts," he laughed.

Springer played against Majors centrefielder Alan Cattrysse in university and met him at a national team tryout a number of years ago. In 2001 he was Dorchester native Chris Robinson's roommate when they played on the Ontario junior team together.

At 27, Springer realizes he's now playing for the love of the game.

"I'm not ready to play softball," he said. "I'm still competitive. I know this league is competitive. I know these players because I played against them. It seemed like a good fit. I came out and told Roop I'd like to be a part of it and do whatever I can to contribute and enjoy it. That's the main thing."

Tuesday was Springer's first game. He's a burly guy with big shoulders and arms and he doesn't expect it to take too long to get the rust out.

"I'm going through bp (batting practice) getting my swings. I'll say it will take a couple of games that way if I do anything (Tuesday) I will surprise you," he said.

He came up in the first inning with two runners on a hit a to first. He then got caught leaning towards second and was picked off.

Majors fan got a glimpse of the kind of power he has with his second at bat. Even though he struck out, he ripped a liner foul. He then hit the ball on a line two-foot foul and a foot below the fence in left field.

Springer recited the mantra of most power hitters.

"Maybe a game or two but all it takes is for a pitcher to make one mistake," he said.

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GAME GLANCE

Majors 18, Twins 7

Pitchers: Winner-Rory Young; Loser-Kyle Branson.

Key moments: Majors: Steve Froese with two homers. Adwin Springer, Cleveland Brownlee with one each. Majors had 10-run sixth, 24 hits on the game; Twins: Scored seven runs with only five hits.

Next: Friday at Labatt Park against the Toronto Maple Leafs, 7:30 p.m.

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