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## Rookie pitcher on a mission

### INTERCOUNTY MAJORS

By RYAN PYETTE, THE LONDON FREE PRESS

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Kevin Mailloux of the London Majors takes a swing during a game against the Burlington Twins at Labatt Park. The Majors won 6-1 in front of more than 2,000 fans in the stands for School Day Get Away. (Derek Ruttan, The London Free Press)

Shortly after twisting the Burlington Twins bats into pretzels, Adam Paish emerged from the London Majors clubhouse wearing a souvenir from his recent mission to Ecuador.

"It's an Inca pendant and it brought me good luck on my trip," the London Majors rookie pitcher said. "I wore it for warmup but they probably would've told me to take it off anyway, and the last thing you want is get a ball hit at you and break it.

"There were a lot of comebackers."

There always are when the reigning Ontario university pitcher of the year from Western is working his stuff on the hill.

Paish threw a complete-game five-hitter in a 6-1 victory Tuesday before more than 2,000 in the Majors' School Day Get Away at a Labatt Park full of kids. The win vaulted London (10-2) into sole possession of first place in the Intercounty Baseball League.

"Roop (Majors manager Roop Chanderdat) called me right after our school season and was interested in having me play," the 22-year-old Mustangs hurler said. "I told him I wasn't sure if you want me because I had to go on this trip to Ecuador and I'd miss some time.

"It's something I've always wanted to do and I figured I better go before I was finished (university)."

The Mississauga native was part of a crew that helped an Ecuadorian Kichwa indigenous tribe build a school for its children.

"I never left the North American continent before and it was a culture shock," he said. "The Kichwa don't have much, but I was a little envious of their kids. They're outside playing all day long and they're happy people. They're right into soccer, that's their sport, but I managed to throw them a couple of pop-ups along the way and they tried to catch them."

He induced the Twins, though, into an impressive 15 groundouts.

"He's got that curveball, gets ahead in the count and that's a guy you want to play defence behind," London second baseman Steve Froese said. "He has a lot of poise out there."

It's no surprise, the way Paish operated on Burlington's batters, he plans to write the MCAT exam to get into medical school. The Twins scored their only run in the fifth after his defence let him down, but wiggled out of more trouble by stranding a pair with a weak pop-on to first and a comebacker to the mound.

"Guys throw harder but I know for me to be successful, I've got to throw strikes and pitch for poor contact," he said. "That's what I've always done."

Paish did more than enough to earn another start.

"He's going to get the chance to get in the rotation," Chanderdat said. "He did a good job for us in the bullpen before he left on his trip. We wanted to give him (last-place) Burlington here and see how he did before feeding him some of the (stronger) teams.

"He's going to get a good look."

The Majors fielders, coming off a six-error debacle against Ottawa, know Paish had the stuff to earn a shutout.

"Should've been," Froese said.

Chanderdat knows the defence has to improve for London to be considered championship-calibre.

"They bounced back from the last game and I think this is a mentally tough team," he said. "What we've talked about is limiting the damage. Hit the cutoff men. Hold them to one run. Avoid the big inning because we know we're going to hit and score."

Barrie is in London for two Sunday and that will be a big test. The Brantford Red Sox always loom large in the pennant race. Is it prime time for the Majors to load up?

"I'm going to watch our pitching and see what happens," Chanderdat said. "We have team chemistry right now and you don't want to mess too much with that."

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#### Majors 6, Twins 1

**The game:** London rookie pitcher Adam Paish went the distance and shortstop Kevin Mailloux put the game away with a two-out, two-run single in the seventh inning. Majors catcher Tyler Graham added a solo homer in the first.

**Next:** The first-place Majors head to Kitchener to take on the rival Panthers Thursday at 7:30 p.m. They're back home for a doubleheader against Barrie on Sunday at 1 p.m.

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