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## SPORTS OTHER SPORTS

### Majors lacking pitching punch

Mon, June 22, 2009

#### INTERCOUNTY BASEBALL

By RYAN PYETTE

Last summer, Josh Palmer and Adam Echlin were practically unbeatable.

They formed a dynamic one-two starting pitching punch that led the London Majors to the regular season pennant and within a win of the Intercounty Baseball League title.

This season, they're not the cause of the Majors' struggles. But their arms certainly haven't provided the cure.

On Friday in Hamilton, Palmer was ejected in a frustrating loss to the last-place, two-win Thunderbirds.

And yesterday, Echlin surrendered long home runs on first pitches to Brantford's Josh McCurdy and Hyung Cho in a 5-1 defeat to the defending champion Red Sox before 700 at Labatt Park.

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"No one's going to go 8-0 every year," London manager Roop Chanderdat said. "Those guys are fine. That's not our problem. Adam pitched well. He lost 2-1 to Barrie in his last start. We're just not hitting. Josh got thrown out (in a four-run T-birds seventh inning in the Steel City) because we had an inning-ending double play overturned. We thought the ball hit the bat and the umpire thought it hit the batter and gave him first base."

Echlin said he's beginning to find his stride after a busy start to the season. He works in the automotive field and ran for union vice-president, which took up considerable time.

He gave up three runs on just four hits in six innings against the hard-hitting Sox. But long balls in the fifth and sixth hurt him and the Majors hitters didn't provide much support.

"I'm starting to (feel good) again," the veteran right-hander said. "Now, I've got Guelph, Barrie and Brantford, three of the best teams in the league, out of the way.

"I tried to keep them off-balance. It just seems right now we can't get the pitching and hitting to come together at the same time.

"Hopefully, we can by the playoffs."

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The Majors dropped to 8-10 in the standings.

Things won't get any easier the rest of the week. After a make-up game with Kitchener tomorrow, London heads to Brantford on Wednesday, then comes home to play Guelph on Friday and Barrie on Sunday.

They'll need more runs than an RBI double in the third from IBL leading hitter Jess Bechard to compete.

"We're not getting the clutch hits right now," Chanderdat said. "I don't think I have to make big changes (to the lineup). I believe in these guys."

The Majors had a chance to pile on a first-inning lead against Brantford lefty Brad Hogeterp with runners on second and third and one out. But Bechard popped out and catcher Will Richards flew out to right field to end the threat.

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All Hogeterp needed was two.

"That's the thing about Brad," third baseman Cho said. "He might give up a couple of runs here and there, but no matter what, he's going to give you quality innings. We don't feel like we've hit our stride yet. What are we hitting as a team -- .260? We're better than that but it shows you pitching and defence can win you ball games.

**INTERCOUNTY BASEBALL**

Red Sox 5, Majors 1

Next: London plays a makeup game from May 29 against the Kitchener Panthers tomorrow night. First pitch at 7:30 p.m. at Labatt Park.

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**Rockies hammer Angels**  
 The Colorado Rockies don't appear to need much help from their opponents these days to win. Yet, the Los Angeles Angels gift-wrapped a couple of runs with two of their club record-tying six wild pitches.  
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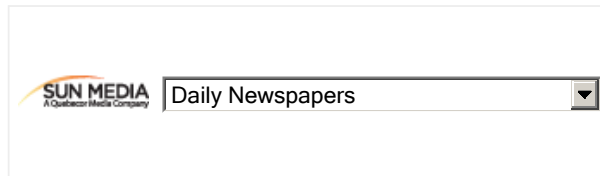
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