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dragged into yesterday afternoon. For Game 1, Hamilton manager Jason Booth faced a rapid six-hour drive between Steel Cities after being reached in Pittsburgh, where he was managing a kid's game.

"We're just trying to help out a league partner," Chanderdat said. "We want Sunday and we still got it. We have Games 2 and 3 at our park. We still have (pitcher) Josh Palmer ready to go and he'll pitch Game 1 there. The dimensions of their place are almost the same as ours.

"Hopefully, we can go in and get that first win and go from there."

Home field has been a major advantage for London. The Majors are 15-3 at Labatt Park, which was the site of a brawl with the T-birds on May 25.

London led 7-0 in the top of the ninth inning. Hamilton infielder Jesse Robertson broke the goose egg by piling into Majors all-star catcher Will Richards. The London player was hurt -- either on the collision or the ensuing punch, he's not sure which -- and hasn't been in the lineup since.

Robertson was slapped with a seven-game suspension. He served it and is now serving his country -- he joined the Armed Forces on Canada Day and isn't expected to be back for the series.

"There's no animosity between us anymore," Chanderdat said. "They're just another team to us. Jesse, to his credit, apologized afterwards to Will and I. So did their coach Adeo (Calcagni). That's not really something you try to do too much -- run over a catcher in a seven-run game but he chose to do it.

"We lost a big bat in our lineup. Will's an outstanding hitter. With him out, it weakened our depth."

Richards had a cast taken off on Monday. He is unlikely to play but Chanderdat is still keeping everybody on his playoff-eligible roster.

The Hamilton crew hasn't thought about the fisticuffs in a long time, Booth said.

"That was a one-time incident and we've played against them since that game," he said. "We like the way we match up against them. We beat them (in their first meeting on May 11 when Hamilton scored six times in the ninth inning to win 7-6) and we played some close games. This year, we just had a lot of injuries, a lot of season-ending injuries, and that hurt us."

London isn't taking anything for granted. Workhorse starter Adam Echlin (7-2) is rehabilitating what Chanderdat calls a leg injury and there's no time table on his return.

Booth said Coogie Freedman, who started a 13-8 loss in London on July 13, is expected to oppose Palmer. In that last meeting, Freedman also batted as the T-birds didn't use a designated hitter.

"We were really short players that game," Booth said. "This time, we probably use the DH."



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