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SPORTS OTHER SPORTS

Majors off to a respectable start

Fri, June 6, 2008

By [RYAN PYETTE](#)

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The London Majors have been looking for signs that things are different this baseball season.

Well, here's one thing certainly not the same: a beat-down of the Brantford Red Sox -- the Intercounty league team that ended London's playoff hopes the past two summers -- on their own diamond.

Majors pitcher Josh Palmer threw a complete-game four-hitter and his batters banged out four-run innings in the third and fifth for a 9-2 win in the Telephone City on Wednesday.

Despite injuries and late arrivals to the roster, London has won six of its first 10 games. The Majors face the struggling Kitchener Panthers tonight at 7:30 p.m. at Labatt Park before a London re-match with the Red Sox Sunday at 1 p.m. on LDBA Day, when kids wearing their team uniforms get in free while accompanied by an adult.

"Brantford's a top notch team in this league and Josh went the whole way to pitch a great game for us," London manager and co-owner Roop Chanderdat said. "We've had some key guys out and we've used some junior players in their place but we feel we have a pretty good young group.

"Maybe outside of the Majors, people are surprised (by the start), but I always have high expectations for our team."

Last year, they struggled after a brawl with Barrie led



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to big suspensions and the major league draft, which began yesterday, cost them a couple of players.

So far, London has found a way to fill the holes without falling from the pack.

Big bat Toshi Sasa, a Japanese import, has a bad hamstring, but help -- in the form of Wyoming native and middle infielder Jeff Helps -- is on the way.

All-star catcher Will Richards went down to injury early and will miss the next six to -eight weeks but Mason Reilly has handled the pitching staff in his absence.

"We hope we can get Will back by playoffs," Chanderdat said.

Veteran Vince Burke is recovering from a broken finger on his glove hand. He can still grip a bat so he's being used as a designated hitter.

"We're hurting a little bit right now but this team has talent and we're starting to round out the roster," Chanderdat said.

"We have a new left-handed pitcher coming in (from Quebec) in Mehdi Djebbar and right-hander Ryan McGorman is here (after playing at Canisius College in Buffalo)."

They should have some runs to work with when they pitch.

Veteran Kyle Piwowarczyk, who has signed to play pro hockey in Germany this fall, had two hits and three walks against Brantford.

Puerto Rican Christian Ruiz fell a homer short of the cycle and Vancouver's Dave Narodowski had three hits, including a triple, against the Sox.

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