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All-around effort pays off for Majors
MAJORS 7, THUNDERBIRDS 2: London wins its fourth of the season
 By **MORRIS DALLA COSTA, FREE PRESS SPORTS COLUMNIST**

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It's a baseball truism -- you win with pitching and defence.

That's what the London Majors got yesterday when they won their fourth game of the season, a 7-2 win over Hamilton Thunderbirds in Intercounty Baseball League play at Labatt Park.

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When you toss in a good old-fashioned brawl that brings a team together, the London Majors are off to a pretty good start this season.

Majors starter Adam Echlin was outstanding in earning his second win. He went eight innings, giving up no runs and only six hits, striking out two but only walking one.

"He's tough," said Majors' manager Roop Chanderdat. "He knows how to pitch. He gets down but he knows how to battle back. He's a bulldog."

Echlin started slowly. but after the second inning he was in control. He retired 11 in a row at one point.

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He also showed how tough he was in the eighth inning with the Majors up 3-0. The first two men reached base. With Josh Palmer working in the bullpen, Echlin struck out Tom Robertson, got Geoff Allan to fly to centre and enticing Jarrod Wehri to foul out.

"I start off kind of slow, I get stronger as the game goes on," Echlin said. "I threw a lot of strikes and that was important. My off-speed stuff was working. I didn't think I had too much of a fastball."

Echlin played last year with Jet Box, a team out of Troy, Mich., that won the American senior World Series. Echlin was then laid off from his job at the Ford plant in Windsor.

"They offered my a job at Talbotville, so I took it. I moved my family and started looking for a team to play for.

"It's been great. I wish 10 years ago I was here. Some of these young kids, I don't think they know what kind of opportunity they have. I never had this opportunity until now. I'm 33 but I'm going to make the best of it."

He's certainly doing that.

"What a find that was," Chanderdat said. "You can see he's going to be our ace. He's a pitcher. He's not a thrower. He keeps guys off balance. We're happy to have him.

Echlin got some fine defensive plays made behind him, especially from 19-year-old shortstop David Narodowski.

Narodowski played for Canada's junior national team. He played at a junior college in Texas, but is headed to the University of Kansas this fall.

"He's a slick-fielding shortstop," Chanderdat said. "We've haven't had a shortstop like him since Geoff McCallum."

A lot of ground balls found their way to Narodowski.

"Playing behind Echlin, he's always getting ground balls," he said. "I love playing behind him.

Narodowski, however, wasn't around at the end of the game. He was one of four players ejected after a ninth-inning bench-clearing brawl.

Tempers were already rising an inning earlier after Majors Jess Bechard hit a two-run homer off reliever Scott Wells to give the Majors a 5-0 lead. Kevin Virtue was the next batter and Wells sailed a pitch over his head.

Virtue took a couple of steps toward the mound as the benches semi-emptied.

With the Majors up 7-0 in the ninth, Palmer came in to relieve Echlin and Hamilton started a small rally. Jesse Robertson ran over Majors catcher Will Richards and wound up on top of him.

Robertson took a punch at Richards. Palmer, who was covering the

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plate, pushed Robertson and both benches emptied quickly.

It was a nasty incident, with several fights breaking out and some pretty good haymakers landing. In the end, Narodowski and Palmer were ejected for London with Robertson and Wells going for Hamilton.

Richards left for the hospital with an injured hand. Richards, who played in Stratford last year, was one of Chanderdat's major off-season acquisitions.

"Their guys takes a swing at our catcher. Anyone is going to defend their guy and that's all we were doing," Chanderdat said. "That's not called for in this game. Hopefully the league looks at it properly and does the right thing."

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