

Majors expand scouting scope

BY ERIC BENDER
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The Intercounty Baseball League's London Majors are now an international organization with 11 scouts in Latin America, the U.S., Mexico, Italy and Japan.

The Majors, under the ownership of Scott Dart and Roop Chanderdat, already have held a tryout camp in Venezuela run by Ozzie Trocony, a former Oakland A's scout.

"We're looking to build a complex in Venezuela and have a London Majors team in their league," Chanderdat, the team's general manager, said yesterday.

From a Jan. 6 Venezuelan camp, two prospects will be coming to London this summer. "They won't necessarily play with the Majors," Chanderdat said. "They may just take batting practice and work out with the team. We've got scholarships for them in Chicago."

The team also has links to the Italian pro league, where the Majors expect to have one of their pitchers from last year sign a pro contract.

"If we have a good relationship with the Italian league, we hope they send players here to experience North American ball," said Dart.

Dart said the Majors' strategy is to help players get drafted by major league teams, get university scholarships or experience the overseas option. "They have to come through London and we'll help them," he said.

Chanderdat said the recruiting competition is fierce, not only from the other Intercounty teams but with the Western Major Baseball League, a top-notch college player venue, leagues in the U.S., where scouts can keep a closer eye on their drafts or prospects, and the independent Northern League.

The Majors were knocked out of the Intercounty playoffs in the first round last year by eventual champion Barrie Baycats after going to the league final in 2004.

Much of last year's team will be back, Chanderdat said, but he has a bunch of new players.

For pitchers, he has 19-year-old right hander Adam Arnold from the St. Thomas Tomcats of the Junior Intercounty league in the fold, along with Hiarali Garcia of Windsor, a right hander playing for Eastern Oklahoma State College. With a fastball ranging from 88 to 91 m.p.h., he plans to play for Kansas University in the fall. He played for Calgary in the Western Major league last summer.

Speedy outfielder Rudy Vallejois of Ottawa, at Grace-land University in Iowa and also with Calgary last summer, is another newcomer.

Second-year players Brad McElroy, an outfielder, and Ryan Gauthier, who was injured much of last season, have signed. Both are on scholarships at U.S. colleges.

Also returning are two-sport man Kyle Piwowarczyk, runner-up in the IBL batting race last year, utility player/pitcher Kevin Virtue and veteran first baseman Simon Galarraga, supervisor of scouting in Latin America.

Dart and Chanderdat also own the Lambeth Lancers of the Junior Development Hockey League.

"We want to be known as sports guys in London," Chanderdat said.