

Brewers come up just short in try for repeat



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A bid for a second North Dufferin Baseball League championship in as many years fell just short on Sunday for the Bolton Brewers. Facing off against the top-ranked Ivy Leafs in the best-of-seven series, the teams traded two wins apiece heading into the third weekend of the finale, with a chance for both sides to end it in a weekend sweep.

Recalling a battle between two of the league's top hurlers in game one of the series, Bolton's Trent Barwick and Ivy's Brad Grieveson once again went toe-to-toe in game five in Ivy, with a much different result.

Barwick was taken yard by the first batter he faced, allowing a lead-off home run to Ivy's Craig Speers in the bottom of the first inning. Brett Chater knocked in the tying run in their half of the second, though the offensive juggernaut Leafs continued pounding away at the ball in the third and took a 5 ? 1 lead.

The Brewers' pitching ace then settled in for the remainder of the way, though it was too little, too late, with Bolton eventually falling 5 ? 2.

Capitalizing with runners on base was a key factor in the loss, with Barwick only allowing five hits, while Bolton's nine hits were mostly left stranded.

Chater had a perfect day at the plate with three singles and a double, while Stephen Warden hit a pair of singles. Mike Wallace, Chris Fafalios, and Greg Keenan added singles of their own.

With the season on the line for game six on Sunday, it was a constant roulette wheel on the mound for the Brewers, who left starter Andrew White on the hook for four runs in the third inning on a series of misplays.

Down 4 ? 1 with two outs in the third, White was relieved by Alex Pagila, who fared no better against the Ivy batters.

After Bolton plated one two bring the deficit back to two, Ivy scored thrice more in the fourth inning to put the game out of reach.

Both Tyler Hawkins and Nick Pettinaro tried their luck on the mound for the final three innings, giving up just one run between the two, though Bolton failed to mount a comeback in an 8 ? 3 losing effort.

League President Jesse McIntyre handed Grieveson the Paul Carruthers Memorial Award as the most valuable player during the playoffs.

Sending the series to six games itself is quite a feat for the Bolton squad: the Leafs dominated the regular season, on the wrong end of the score just once, while sweeping their way to the NDBL finals.

Perennial favourites to take home the coveted Strother Cup, the Brewers had won the championship seven of their last eight years in the AA division.

Opting to spend a pair of seasons in the AAA Greater Toronto Baseball League before rejoining the NDBL full time in 2017, they took down the New Lowell Knights in five games to reclaim the title last year.