

Bolton Brewers lambaste the Lisle Astros 14-4 and 20-4 to open their NDBL Playoff Series

By Jim Stewart

The first-place Bolton Brewers took care of business on Thursday and Friday night with a pair of emphatic playoff wins over the eighth-seeded Lisle Astros.

Bolton beat Lisle 14-4 at North Hill Park and 20-4 at Ross Houston Memorial Park to take a commanding 2-0 lead in their best-of-five NDBL quarterfinal series.

In the lid-lifter on Thursday night, the Brewers jumped out to an emphatic 4-0 first-inning lead by sending nine batters to the plate against Astros' left-handed starter Eric Jones.

Chris Fafalios pounded out a two-RBI double that plated Brett Chater and Drew Volkey.

Brewers' Player-Head Coach Mike Wallace noted that his leftfielder's two-base hit was a key to the team's victory.

?Chris Fafalios's first at-bat was big?his opening double brought in two runs and set the tone for the game.?

Carter Burnside's RBI groundout plated Wallace to make it 3-0 and John Hutchinson's timely two-out single scored Fafalios to put the Brew Crew up by four.

Bolton added a run in the second to make it 5-0 when Volkey tripled off the right-field fence?narrowly missing a home run by inches ? and Wallace's RBI single cashed the speedy centerfielder from third.

Lisle narrowed the margin to 5-2 when Evan Tuckett and Travis Hall scored on a costly overthrow by Brewers' starter Victor Moguel at the top of the third, but the Brewers responded with three consecutive singles by Hutchinson, Amin Juarez, and Nathan Drury at the bottom of the inning to put Bolton up 6-2.

The teams exchanged runs in the fifth inning. Astros' catcher Ryan Smith drilled a two-out RBI single to cut the Brewers' lead to three, but Brett Chater's two-out single at the bottom of the inning plated Juarez to restore Bolton's four-run lead at 7-3.

The Astros provided an element of suspense at the top of the sixth when Hall's fielder's choice RBI cut Lisle's deficit to three, but two dazzling defensive plays by Bolton centerfielder Drew Volkey and a key strikeout delivered by Brewers' starter Victor Moguel shut the door on the visitors' uprising.

Coach Wallace was impressed with the efforts of his centerfielder as well as his starter's big strikeout with the game on the line:

?Drew has played great for us all season in center. He's a special player that made great plays for us tonight. Victor's been a tremendous pitcher that gets it done and has done so all season. That's what Victor does.?

The sparkling plays in centerfield by Volkey and the key strikeout by the Brewers' ace seemed to lift Bolton out of its mid-game funk.

The pennant-winning club pounded out seven runs in the sixth inning to end the game on a decisive 14-4 note at North Hill Park. Amin Juarez drove in two runs and Carter Burnside, Greg Keenan, Volkey, and Fafalios each contributed RBI singles to lead the offensive explosion versus Astros relief pitcher Jake Luck who was chased after 2/3 of an inning and charged with 6 of the 7 Bolton runs.

Moguel finished what he started and threw all six innings to earn the win.

The Brewers' ace pitched effectively to contact all night versus Lisle and induced eight ground ball outs, including a sparkling inning-ending 6-4-3 double play by Chater, Wallace, and Hutchinson at the top of the third to limit Lisle to two runs.

The Brewers also played errorless outfield defense behind Moguel and recorded six putouts at critical junctures in the game.

Coach Wallace credited his team's defence on Friday night as a decisive factor: "In addition to nice catches by Drew and Chris in the outfield tonight, I thought Brett Chater played a great game at shortstop for us, too. Brett's been steady all season and he's been at the heart of our D. He's a plus-defender."

On Friday night at Lisle, the Brewers bats boomed for a second consecutive evening and it was Chater who did much of the damage in the 20-4 blowout.

The slick-fielding shortstop and leadoff man led the aerial attack versus the Astros with a grand slam and five RBIs.

Drew Volkey contributed four hits and a solo home run. Head Coach and second baseman Mike Wallace had a very productive night at the dish, too, to lead the troops by example.

The veteran Brewer drove in four runs and collected two hits in Game 2 at Ross Houston Memorial Park. Carter Burnside contributed two doubles and two RBIs to the onslaught.

Starter Trent Barwick went the distance in the mercy-shortened contest to earn the W for the high-flying Brewers. It was the second time this season that Bolton has recorded a 16-run win?the previous lop-sided contest being in late-July when they trounced the Clarksburg Blues 19-3.