

Bolton Brewers sent home early from NDBL playoffs, after five championships

By Jake Courtepatte

For the first time in six seasons, the Bolton Brewers are not heading to the North Dufferin Baseball League Championship Series. After being handed their first loss of the postseason last Sunday, in the first game of the best-of-five semifinal series against the Ivy Leafs, the Brewers were at home Thursday trying to even the series at one.

However, Ivy pitcher Brad Grieveson shut out the side, diminishing Brewer Mike Blackwood's three-run performance.

Facing elimination, the Brewers picked up a 6-0 win in the third game, from which Coach Mike Wallace said "the bats started coming out".

Zack Ridell took to the mound in game four, looking for redemption for his game one loss.

Up 4-2 in the bottom of the fifth, Bolton looked poised to send the series to a fifth and deciding game.

However, a grand slam by Leaf Kevin Dumond sent the home team into a frenzy, and left the Brewers in a hole they could not crawl out of.

Ivy would take the game 7-5, and the series in four games.

"It's been the first time in a number of years that anyone has been able to stop the Bolton Brewers," said Vance White, coach of the Ivy Leafs. "That's not to take anything away from the Brewers. They worked hard all year, and they've got a great team."

Ivy has not won the NDBL Championship and Strother Cup trophy since 2003.

Bolton's playoff batting simply could not mirror their regular season output, averaging only 4.5 runs per game.

"You could tell we just hit a funk scoring runs," said Wallace. "You're not going to win too many games like that."

"We were hitting really well, we were just leaving guys on base," he added. "Game four pretty much summed up the series - we kept loading the bases and couldn't score, they loaded the bases once and hit a grand slam."

Wallace also acknowledged the outstanding Ivy pitching duo of Chad Watters and Grieveson, who combined for only seven runs given up through the three wins.

"You have to really give them credit, they pitched well," he observed. "They were definitely the better team in the series."

Facing the Leafs in the championship series are the Aurora Jays, who finished in first place over the season and have swept their first two series. The Brewers defeated the Jays in the championship last year.

The Brewers end their 2014 campaign with an impressive 21-5-0 regular season record, as well as a 4-3-0 playoff record.

Brett Chater led the league in hitting with a .483 average, cashing in 30 runs over 42 hits.

Defensively, the Brewers gave up only 62 runs all season. Andrew White led the charge on the mound allowing only seven hits through 44 innings thrown.

The Brewers had won five NDBL Championships in a row, dating back to 2009.

"This is pretty new to us, so it's unfortunate," said Wallace. "But we want to thank the fans for their support all year."



The Bolton Brewers were eliminated in the North Dufferin Baseball League semifinals, after five straight championship seasons. Photos courtesy of David Anderson (NDBL)