

Bolton Brewers win NDBL regular season pennant and open playoffs versus the Lisle Astros on Thursday

By **Jim Stewart**

The Bolton Brewers wrapped up their North Dufferin Baseball League regular season with three consecutive wins to capture the 2023 pennant.

The first-place Brewers (18-2-2) host the Lisle Astros (9-11-2) at North Hill Park on Thursday night at 7:30 PM in Game 1 of their NDBL Best-of-5 Series. Game 2 follows on August 11 in Lisle at 6:15 PM. Game 3 is scheduled for August 13 in Bolton at 1 PM.

The Brewers closed out their 2023 regular season emphatically and gathered momentum for the playoffs with three very different wins. Bolton's 19-3 win over the Clarksburg Blues was called mercifully after five innings.

The Brewers clinched the pennant with a 7-3 victory over New Lowell, despite issuing 10 walks to the second-place Knights. In the last game on their NDBL schedule, Bolton eked out a narrow 7-6 win over Barrie after jumping out to a 7-1 lead versus the Angels.

In the nail-biter versus Barrie, the Brewers established a commanding six-run lead after four innings, but surrendered a 5-spot to the Angels in the fifth inning to turn a laugher into a pressurized balancing act versus the third-place squad. Nathan Drury led the Brewers' offence with 2 hits and 2 runs scored. Brett Chater went 3 for 3 in the lead-off spot.

Bolton starter Trent Barwick earned the win and Aaron Dzib thwarted a Barrie comeback victory to earn a timely save.

In the Brewers' pennant-clinching win at New Lowell, the visitors got on the scoreboard right away and carried a 1-0 lead through the top of the third.

The Knights drew even at the bottom of the inning, but the Brewers broke the 1-1 tie with three runs at the top of the fourth and added two more at the top of the fifth to pull away from the 2022 NDBL champs.

Bolton outhit New Lowell 13-5 and its offence was paced by Amin Juarez and Logan Hart with three hits each. Stephen Warden and Carson Burns scored 2 runs each. Starter Nick Pettinaro?despite issuing seven free passes to the Knights?secured the win for the Brewers.

In the mercy-shortened victory over Clarksburg, Bolton pounded out 17 hits and scored 3 runs at the top of the first, added two more at the top of the second, and exploded for a 6-spot at the top of the third to pull away from the Blues.

The Brewers added four runs in both the fourth and fifth innings to shorten the game to a five-inning contest and preserve their pitching staff.

Player-Coach Mike Wallace and the team's leading hitter Chris Falfalios had 4-hit nights to pace the Brewers' offensive onslaught at Moreau Park in Thornbury.

Falfalios scored four runs with Chater and Wallace crossing the plate three times each to account for 10 of the team's 19 runs. Starter Eddie Rodriguez scattered five hits over five innings and struck out ten Blues to earn the shortened CG.

NDBL playoff matchups: In first round action, the second-place New Lowell Knights (17-4-1) take on the seventh-place Creemore Padres (10-9-3). The third-place Barrie Angels (16-6-0) will battle the sixth-place Midland Mariners (11-10-1). The Ivy Rangers (14-6-2) finished fourth and will take on the fifth-place Clearview Orioles (14-7-1).