

## Brewers' bats stay hot in 13-5 beating of Ivy Rangers

Warden and Sterritt go deep against 2024 playoff nemesis

**By Jim Stewart**

Veterans Ben Sterritt and Steve Warden hit seventh inning home runs that served as exclamation points in the Brewers' impressive 13-5 win over the Rangers in Ivy on Thursday night.

Player-Coach Mike Wallace expressed relief that the Brewers' bats have heated up with the weather.

"The offense is starting to click. It's what we expected. We've always been more of a hitting team. After a cold and wet start to the season where we were a bit behind due to a number of cancelled permits, it's great to see the return of our offensive power."

Coach Wallace praised the power of his home run hitters versus Ivy.

"Ben's shot was an opposite field home run?they were pitching him tough all game, but he hit a curveball over the centerfield fence. It was great to see him stay back on an off-speed pitch. Steve Warden?in typical fashion?absolutely rocketed one over the left field fence. The outfielders started tracking Sterritt's home run, but Warden's shot was gone off the bat. The outfielders barely flinched. There wasn't a field in this league that would have held that ball."

Chris Fafalios, who leads Bolton in batting average, showed his versatility by toeing the rubber for the Brewers.

Coach Wallace was pleased with Fafalios's spot start.

"It was great to see. We've been experimenting with expanding our pitching staff. Chris has been throwing pens on the side. We were going to go with a bullpen game against Ivy, but we didn't need to because Chris threw over five innings for us."

Fafalios drew dual duty on Thursday night in Ivy. The veteran gave the Brewers 5 1/3 innings, scattered six hits, and struck out three Rangers. He contributed with the bat, too?collecting two hits, driving in one, and scoring three runs.

Another Brewer doing double duty was Sterritt who threw 1 1/3 innings of scoreless relief and struck out two Rangers. The speedy centerfielder banged out three hits, including his 7th inning dinger, and scored three runs.

Coach Wallace discussed the value of Sterritt's innings pitched: "We're going with a smaller roster this season so the bullpen could be a bit challenging for us. We're looking for Chris, Ben, and Brett Chater to come in from their defensive positions and help our bullpen."

Brett Chater and Coach Wallace also collected three hits each to help pace the Brewers' potent offence which has produced 43 runs during Bolton's three-game winning streak.

Reid Deibert and Warden drove in three runs each.

The Brewers exacted a small measure of revenge against the Rangers and their starting pitcher Jamie Gillispie, who was responsible for dispatching Bolton out of the 2024 NDBL playoffs in the second round.

"He's one of the league's best pitchers so when you get a win versus Jamie, you take it and run. We made Jamie work and got his pitch count up. We're a good hitting team and we had quality at-bats against him on Thursday night."

The Brewers will need those quality bats on Saturday when they play a doubleheader against league-leading Midland. The Mariners currently sport a 7-1-1 record and Coach Wallace discussed the keys to beating Midland: They've brought in a lot of younger players, including pitchers. We know they're going to be aggressive and we'll need to take advantage of that.?

With the victory in Ivy over the Rangers, Bolton improved its third-place record to 6-3-1. The Brewers' next home game is Thursday, June 19 versus the Barrie Angels. First pitch will be 7:30 p.m. at North Hill Park.