

Brewers rock Rangers 10-0 in NDBL Semifinal Series Opener

By Jim Stewart

The Bolton Brewers used two five-run outbursts to defeat the Ivy Rangers 10-0 in the opener of their best-of-five semifinal NDBL series at North Hill Park on Sunday night.

The Brewers' bats were as hot as the game-time temperature which hovered around 29 degrees Celsius at first pitch.

Sunday's semifinal matchup featured two hard-throwing right-handers?Matt Barr of the Rangers and Aaron Dzib of the Brewers?and both starters cruised through an inning and a half of scoreless ball.

However, the hot August night became a very precarious one for Barr in the second inning as the Brewers sent 11 batters to the plate.

Bolton's John Hutchinson opened the scoring when his RBI single plated Carter Burnside's leadoff hit.

After Amin Jaurez was grazed by a Barr pitch and Nathan Drury laid down a perfect bunt down the third base line to load the bases, Dan Accardo was hit by a pitch to plate Jaurez. Brett Chater drew a bases-loaded walk to plate Hutchinson to make it 3-0 and Drew Volkey's single plated Drury to increase the lead to 4-0. Brewers' DH Mike Wallace drew a bases-loaded walk to score Accardo to make it 5-0 and chased Barr from the game after one inning of work.

Rangers' reliever Jaret Vanderpost entered the fray with the bases loaded, nobody out, and disaster looming, but he induced Chris Fafalios to strike out looking and got Carter Burnside to ground into a 4-6-3 double play to get out of the jam.

By contrast, Brewers' starter Aaron Dzib rolled out a pair of neat 1-2-3 innings at the top of the third and fourth. He was aided by a slick inning-ending double play by Juarez. The Brewers' second baseman made an athletic play to swipe tag the Rangers' baserunner and throw to first baseman Hutchinson to end the third inning. Dzib helped himself by coolly fielding his position on a GO1-3 to secure the last out and preserve his five-run lead.

The steady defence and effective starting pitching by the Brewers set the stage for their next five-run outburst.

Bolton exploded for six hits at the bottom of the fourth. Accardo's leadoff single and Brett Chater's double in the gap were cashed in by Volkey's 2-RBI double to increase Bolton's lead to 7-0. The speedy centerfielder collected three RBIs versus the Rangers to lead the Brewers' offence.

After Wallace flew out to center field, three consecutive singles by Fafalios, Burnside, and Juarez as well as an RBI fielder's choice by Josh Catalanotto plated Volkey, Fafalios, and Burnside in succession to chase Vanderpost from the game.

The Rangers' second reliever, Adam Vanderheyden, secured the last two outs of the inning, but it was ?too little too late? as the visitors trailed 10-0 heading into the top of the fifth.

With a mercy-shortened game imminent, Brewers' starter Aaron Dzib worked his way through a cramped arm and some rare shaky defense that allowed the first two Rangers to reach base.

Bolton's right-hander bore down and struck out three Rangers in a row to add an exclamation point to the resounding semifinal victory.

Brewers' Head Coach Mike Wallace was impressed with his hurler's complete game playoff performance:

?It was big. We needed it to save some pitching for this playoff series and Aaron did that for us tonight. I'm not sure we could have drawn it up any better, especially striking out the side after the first two batters got on at the top of the fifth.

Aaron's elbow was a bit sore and he had a cramp in his arm, but he worked his way through it to get the win.?

Coach Wallace also liked his team's ?collective effort, especially our competitive at-bats.?

?We had a tremendously strong showing with the bats tonight, much as we've done all season. The doubles by Chater and Volkey were big hits for us.?

Wallace added that ?our defense made some big plays tonight, especially Amin's double play to close the third inning.?

?[Rangers starter] Matt Barr's a great pitcher and he'll be back in this series. Tonight, we were able to get him to come into the zone and it made the difference.?

The Brewers advanced to the NDBL semifinals by eliminating the Lisle Astros 3 games to 1 in their best-of-five quarterfinal series.

Bolton beat the Astros 11-5 in Game 4 on Tuesday night in Lisle, after losing 4-1 at North Hill Park in Game 3. The Brewers' offensive machine was on full display in three of the four games as the league's pennant winners outscored the Astros 46-13 in the four-game playoff series.

The Brewers won the first two games of the opening round series by lop-sided scores of 14-4 and 20-0.