

Warden wallops game-winning hit in Brewers? dramatic 2-1 walk-off win to open NDBL semifinals against Ivy Rangers

By Jim Stewart

Steve Warden delivered the game-winning hit and Aaron Dzib pitched a complete game two-hitter to lead Bolton to a dramatic come-from-behind 2-1 walk-off victory over the Ivy Rangers at North Hill Park on Sunday night.

The sudden, seventh inning surge by the Brewers gave them a 1-0 advantage in the best-of-five North Dufferin Baseball League semifinal series.

The Rangers took a 1-0 lead at the top of the second inning when Riley Davies's double was plated by Noah Sauder's RBI single. It was one of only two Ivy hits surrendered by Dzib who struck out six Rangers in his seven innings of work.

The visitors held their one-run margin until the bottom of the seventh when Brewers' four-spot hitter Warden transformed a woeful night at the plate into a wonderful walk-off win for his ball club. Warden's game-winning heroics also upended a masterful 13-strikeout shutout performance by Ivy ace Matt Barr.

With Brett Chater on second and Amin Juarez on first, the Rangers opted to walk the Brewers' three-spot hitter Ben Sterritt to load the bases and face Warden. Barr had struck out Warden three times on Sunday night prior to the clean-up hitter's seventh inning plate appearance and the Rangers rolled the dice.

Brewers' Head Coach Mike Wallace described Warden's climactic game-winning hit.

?Steve had struggled up to that point, but I was surprised that Ivy would put the winning run in scoring position by walking Ben. After the intentional walk to Sterritt to load the bases, Steve hit a first-pitch slider the other way?a hot shot, line drive over the second baseman's head to plate Chater and Jaurez. That was a good way to win.?

Coach Wallace expressed a combination of satisfaction and relief--regarding his club's semi-final win at North Hill Park.

?It was great to be part of that game. It's a big win for us and one of the most enjoyable games I've ever been a part of. Both the pitchers were really rolling. That was good one to win, a tough one to lose, and we protected home field advantage in the series. North Hill Park is suited to our style of gap-to-gap hitting and the bigger dimensions help the type of hitters we have.?

Coach Wallace applauded his starting pitcher for his timely performance and credited Dzib as a significant factor in the team's big win.

?Without Aaron, we don't have a chance. It was his best pitching performance this season.?

The performance of Dzib's counterpart, Matt Barr, was also noted by the Brewers' bench boss.

?He's one of the league's best pitchers?if not the best pitcher in the entire league. To beat a guy of his caliber is a big win for us to start a playoff series.?