



# SPORTS

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

TUESDAY JULY 1, 1997

## Four double plays

### Lynch happy with pro debut

By **STEVE LeBLANC**  
Special to *The Champion*

**P**at Lynch may not have earned the W, but his professional debut was a win nonetheless.

The Milton pitcher was aggressive and effective in his first start with the Medicine Hat Blue Jays last Thursday, and helped the rookie league team to a 9-5 victory over Lethbridge.

Scattering four hits over five innings, he gave up only one run and enjoyed a 5-1 cushion when he hit the showers.

"I came back and suddenly the game was tied," said Lynch, who signed with Toronto last summer. He celebrated his 19th birthday Friday.

#### One strikeout, one walk

While some shaky relief pitching turned his win into a no-decision, a final offensive surge kept his debut on a positive note.

His performance included one strikeout and one walk.

Medicine Hat made four double plays with Lynch on the mound. He was instrumental in two of them.

This may be what fans remember most from the team's first win of 1997, but their new ace hurler has his own memory to cherish.

"I got ahead of all the batters and didn't get into any jams," he recalled.

"I wasn't overly happy with my control, but my fastball was really working. I was more anxious than nervous out there. I had been waiting for this since day one."

#### Prolonged training

Extended spring training in Dunedin, Florida only intensified his anxiety.

Sizzling temperatures and tedious routine day-in and day-out was not his idea of an enjoyable inception into professional baseball.

"We did a lot of running and I'd often be so tired I would need an afternoon nap. There were days when I'd weigh in at 195 lbs.

before practice and 190 lbs. afterwards.

"I could do without spring training, but obviously it's a crucial part of player development," he said.

Lynch is among the first crop of Blue Jay hopefuls to adopt the organization's new plan for lower class pitchers.

In an effort to prevent burnout yet get his starters into more game situations, Medicine Hat pitching coach Neil Allen has switched over to a four-man rotation and is restricting the pitch count to 80.

#### Reached his limit

Added Lynch, "I felt like I could have gone the full game, but with this new plan I had reached my limit."

The Blue Jays will pay for a portion of his college tuition this fall, as part of his one-year contract.

He'll stay on with Medicine Hat throughout the summer, with the ever-present opportunity of moving up to single A short-season play (in St. Catharines) waiting in the wings.

## Thin thread grows ever more frayed for Junior Mavericks

By **STEVE LeBLANC**  
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The Milton Jr. B Mavericks had been hanging on to the final Founder's Cup playoff spot by a very thin thread over the past two weeks. That thread finally snapped Friday night.

Jim Leworthy's crew could have secured a Tier I post-season berth with a win over the Guelph Regals at Tonelli Arena. As has been the case through most of June however, a shortened bench and lack of focus cost them a 9-7 loss and their Founder's Cup seating.

Milton still has a chance to unseat Guelph, but will likely need a little assistance from Spartan — whom the Regals will face Thursday in their final regular season outing.

Guelph beat Spartan in their last confrontation and have won six of their last eight games.

The Mavericks can buy back their Tier I playoff spot if Guelph loses and they beat the Posse Sunday evening in Brantford.

If Guelph wins they'll need to beat both the Posse and the powerhouse Scarborough Saints Friday at Tonelli.

With the way things are going, this second scenario appears highly improbable.

Work commitments by Brad and Brent Moyer, Adam Cunningham and Jeff Currie — plus a still injured Ian Parker — kept the Mavericks short-staffed again Friday night.

They headed into action with only 14 runners. That number was reduced by five midway through the second frame when a line brawl resulted in ejections for Mark Biesel, Jimmy Leworthy Jr., Craig Hedley, Donald Perry and Paul Wade.

Only four Regals were tossed to Milton's five during the scrap — highlighted by Biesel's annihilation of Donald Johnston — thus giving Guelph a three

### Milton Mavericks



lines to two advantage over the final 32 minutes of play.

Trailing 6-2 prior to the fight, the Mavericks kept things surprisingly close down the stretch and came within a heartbeat of pulling off a third-period rally.

This was due to feisty performances from captain Andrew Hartholt and Jr. B veteran Shawn Bomberry, who combined for three goals inside seven minutes.

Teammate Cory Leigh then drew his team within one at 16:40. Unfortunately for hometown fans, the Mavericks were caught up floor two minutes later and allowed Guelph to fire an all-important insurance marker to seal the victory.

Bomberry turned a hat-trick on the night while Hartholt surpassed the 100-point plateau with two goals and two assists. He now has 103 points for 10th place in the Jr. B scoring race.

Leigh added two helpers to his single tally. Goaltender Kevin Eansor came up with some big saves in the first and final frames to hold Guelph under the double-digit mark.

Midget players Derek Birnie and Jason Ford once again saw action in Currie, Cunningham and the Moyer brothers' absence.

Leading the way for the Regals was top sniper Pat Martin, who scored twice in the third and four times overall. Teammate Chad Savery helped set up three of those tallies and finished the night by sinking Guelph's insurance goal.



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Pat Lynch, 19, of Milton recently made his professional debut with the Medicine Hat Blue Jays and passed with flying colours. The pitcher led the team to a 9-5 victory over Lethridge.

## Sox pull up their socks

The Milton Red Sox major midgets cut down on their errors and finally cut into the win column last Tuesday at Maplehurst Ball Park.

The Karmax-sponsored team made only one defensive mistake in earning a 4-2 victory over the Burlington Braves. It was their first league win this season.

"We're 1-9-1 in COBA (Central Ontario Baseball Association) so far this year, but that record isn't really indicative of our performance," said manager Larry Black, who struggled with a short bench for much of the spring."

The Red Sox were in fact that different team against Burlington, who managed just six hits, four walks and a pair of runs off starting pitcher Chris Hunt. Replacing him in the sixth was closer Todd Black, who fanned three and allowed only one base hit.

Jack Turner drove in Bob Brooks for Milton's game-winning run. It came in the bottom of the fifth. A Braves' infield error resulted in an insurance score moments later.

Sean Hardcastle and Ryan Smith collected the other RBIs, cashing in Bobby McKnight and Jamie McBride — who stole home for their last run and collected two other stolen bases earlier on. Geoff Bahr was another offensive standout with two hits and a walk while Smith and Black made key defensive plays at shortstop and centre field respectively.

Milton was even more defensively sound two nights later in Mississauga. Soreness in starter Justin Lawrence's arm however, dampened an error-free game and gave the host Bloor Jays a 7-3 decision.

Lawrence and Black were hit for six runs in the first three innings to end their hopes for a winning streak. Bahr in turn destroyed Bloor's hopes for a shutout with a two-run double in the fifth.

Ryan McHugh drove in the other run. Smith turned in some impressive running and stole three bases. Jay Babel made some strong catches in right field.

Milton will take on powerhouse Oakville tonight (Tuesday) at Maplehurst, starting at 7:30 p.m.