

Hyatt's big bat propels Red Sox to 6-3 win

His timely mammoth home run breaks 3-3 tie in eighth inning

By MURRAY TOWNSEND
Special to The Champion

It was a monster shot that even Jurassic Park would have had difficulty keeping within its confines.

Charlie Hyatt's long home run in the bottom of the eighth inning, with the score tied, helped the Milton H.J.M. Insurance Red Sox to a 6-3 win over the Streetsville Tigers Sunday at Brian Best Park.

This could be the turning point of the season for the Red Sox. With their record now at 3-7, they were running out of excuses.

Manager Glenn Turner was ecstatic afterwards. "This is the type of game we're used to (from last year). Great pitching, great defence, timely hitting. If we keep going like this, nobody can touch us."

Haunting them in the early going has been the spectre of last year's controversial playoff loss. That was the game in the finals where Hyatt was called out for not touching second base on a Brent Currie home run.

Hyatt's indignance at the injustice earned him a five game suspension at the start of this year. He, along with Turner agreed that it has been tough for the team to shake the memory.

Hyatt is just starting to hit his stride now. A prolific power hitter in the past this was just his first dinger of the season.

"When you're older it takes you a little longer. It takes four or five games to see the ball. But it's coming."

He thinks the club is also hitting its stride. "This team's too good not win."

The Red Sox got on the board in the first inning. Hyatt started it off with a single up the middle and then moved around to third

on wild pitches between a couple of fly outs. That brought up cleanup hitter Doug Dunn who skied an infield pop-up that poked a hole in the ozone layer. With the sun shining directly in his eyes, the Streetsville second baseman just shrugged his shoulders and worked on his nails while waiting for the ball to come down. When it finally landed a few feet away from him, Hyatt had crossed the plate and Dunn was on first with a single.

Milton sent Tim Chapman to the mound for his first start of the season. He was returning from a scholarship at a U.S. university. Chapman had quit the team last year but was welcomed back into the fold.

"If he maintains his cool," said Turner, "he and Al (Dairou) are in the top five (pitchers) in this league."

He got into trouble in the second inning giving up three runs on a couple walks, a couple hits, an error and another pop up lost in the sun, this time by second baseman John Blasko who like his Streetsville counterpart could only stand by helplessly.

In the other four innings he threw, Chapman gave up just one hit, an infield nubber. He struck out five over five innings and by about the third inning began getting his excellent curve ball over for strikes and was throwing heat that Turner felt was approaching 90 miles per hour.

He didn't want to wear Chapman out because he hadn't pitched in close to three weeks, preferring to let him build up his strength.

Besides that, he had some other hurlers chomping at the bit. One of those was Brian Kempster who threw three innings of one-hit shutout relief, getting six of his nine outs on ground balls.

The infield redeemed themselves for some poor play lately with Matt McCandless handling the shortstop position to perfection as did Sean Davidson at third base and Al Dairou at first. Doug Dunn, playing yet another position, this time right field, made another spectacular (but almost routine for him) catch, diving to snare a hard hit line drive to his left.

Down 3-1 in the fifth inning, the Red Sox used textbook baseball to engineer their comeback. Many of the Milton hitters in the early part of the game appeared overly anxious at the plate with too many of them going after the first pitch. When Sean Davidson led off the fifth inning, however, he was a study in patience. He seemed determined to get on base somehow and waited out the Streetsville pitcher, drawing the walk on five pitches.

That's exactly the type of play they needed according to Turner who lauded Davidson's

patience. "If we can get runners on, we can do something."

And so they did. Rick McTrach, giving the signs, put on the sacrifice and Tim Blackadar executed to perfection. Davidson moved to third base on a wild pitch and then Tony Casarin brought him in with a single.

The seventh inning was almost a carbon copy of the fifth. Davidson was hit by a pitch, stole second, and then Casarin hit another single to tie the score.

That set up the eighth inning and Hyatt's homer. After that, Dunn reached on an error, Dairou was hit by a pitch and Davidson drove them both home with a double for some H.J.M. Insurance.

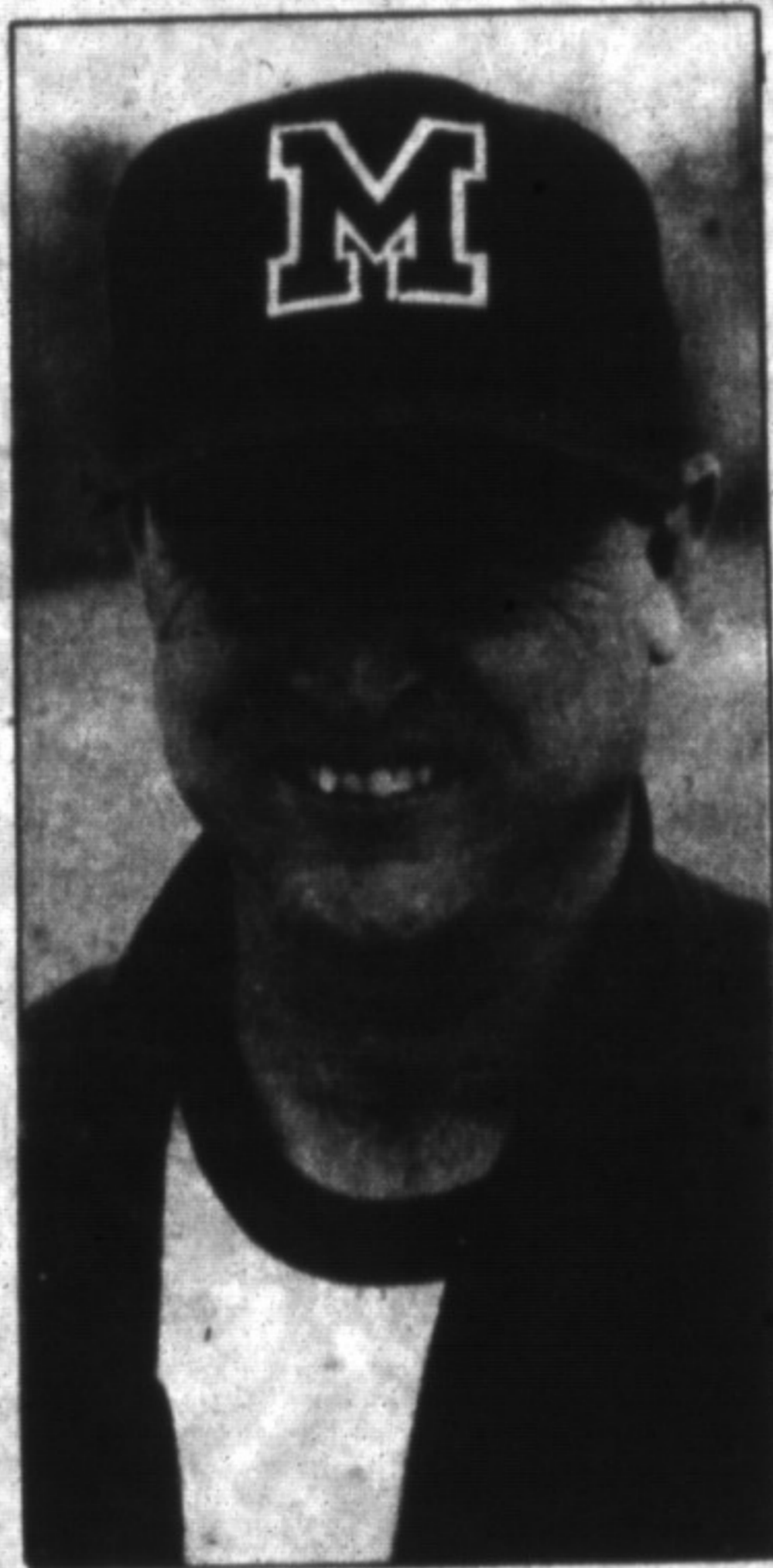
Of course, a Red Sox game without controversy is as rare as a weekend without rain in these parts. They're a group that can become easily fired up and they take no Zhitnik from anyone. When Dairou was hit by the pitch he took a couple steps toward Streetsville pitcher Dave Strutt and words were exchanged then and later. The Red Sox had been hitting the ball hard that inning and although it didn't make a lot of sense at that juncture in the game it wasn't inconceivable that the Streetsville pitcher was sending a message.

Dairou, a pitcher himself, said he could have been wrong but had an interesting analysis of the situation.

When a pitcher looks at the batter when throwing, instead of into the catcher's mitt, it's a pretty good indication that he's not trying for a strike.

Brian Gadd closed the game with a quick ninth inning to drop Streetsville to a 4-7 record.

The next home contest for the Red Sox is 1:30 Sunday at Brian Best Park.



Charlie Hyatt

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