LA PRESSE SPORTIVE

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Machine staff allows four runs, sweeps 102-win Gremlins

BY **ÉTIENNE CHARBONNEAU** · LA PRESSE SPORTIVE

Two Octobers ago Galveston beat the Machine four games to none, in the first postseason this city had seen in 20 years, and I told you in my last column that I remember the weather from that week better than the baseball. This October it was 41 degrees at Machine Stadium on Monday, with the wind blowing out to center at 13 miles an hour, and 42 and clear on Tuesday, and I remember the baseball. Montreal won four games to none. Galveston, which won 102 games this season, the second-most in baseball, scored four runs in the series.

Four runs in 36 innings. The staff's earned run average for the week was 1.00, and it walked seven men. Each of the four starters went at least five and two-thirds innings and none of them allowed more than one run. T.J. Larson, in Galveston on the first night, allowed one in six and a third and was named Player of the Game. Jim Taunton allowed one in six the next night. John Kropp allowed one in six and a third here on Monday, a home run by Oscar Mitchell, and nothing else. And on Tuesday Jong-su Im struck out 12 in five and two-thirds scoreless innings, which is a club record for a postseason game.

Behind them the bullpen allowed one run in 11 and two-thirds innings, which I would describe as customary if I had any right to that word in October. Dave Santillan, who saved 34 games this year, pitched in three of the four games and was not scored on. Chris Griffiths, who had an earned run average of 0.69 after the deadline, saved three, one of them with a single pitch. Dave Roughton got the last seven outs of the last game.

The hitting came from somebody different every night. In the first game it was 1-1 in the eighth when Chris Bethea, with two out, hit a two-run home run to right. In the second Montreal scored four in the second inning on doubles by Dustin Waterman, Ryan Weigold and Yuigo Sakaguchi, and two more in the seventh on

two walks with the bases loaded. In the third, Willie Solis and Tom Fotter hit solo home runs in the first two innings and that was the game, 2-1. In the fourth, Fotter hit a two-run home run in the second and drove in another in the fourth, and Dean Salvucci hit a three-run home run in the eighth and was named Player of the Game. Fotter finished 4-for-11 with two home runs and four runs batted in. Galveston hit .201 and went 2-for-26 with runners in scoring position.

Salvucci went 4-for-16 with a double, a home run, two walks and a stolen base. For him that is a .250 batting average, which is a different climate altogether. The argument in the bars on Saint-Laurent has been suspended, not settled.

Jimmy Smith, whom the front office sold to Huron in July, started twice for the Herons against Big Horn and lost both games.

In my last column I also wrote that I would believe in this team in the spring. I am told it is October and that a team which allows four runs in four games to the club with the second-best record in baseball has been believed in by most of the province already. This is the second year in a row the Machine has won a series in October. The last time it managed two in a row was 2006 and 2007.

And so to Somerville, which won 106 games and beat Denver four games to one. The first two are there, on Monday and Tuesday. The Machine comes home on Thursday the 21st for three, and if it gets that far, goes back for the last two on the 25th and 26th. Somerville won the season series 7-5. Montreal swept Somerville here in August and was swept there in September.

The clubs have met three times in October. Montreal swept the first one in 2003, three games to none. Somerville won in 2007, four straight. And Somerville won in 2009, in seven, and the seventh game was here, on October 15, and Montreal lost it 4-1. It was the last postseason game this city saw for 20 years. I was not on the beat yet. I have heard about it every October since, from people who were, and they all remember the weather.