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Tempest in a tee-ball

AMBA: To tee, or not to tee

by John Bottomley
The first local baseball season to be played without a tee-ball league has reached the playoff stages, and few people on the Acton Minor Baseball executive seem to miss it, although there is evidence that it helps the young players-to-be to learn the fundamentals of the game.

In tee-ball, the batter steps up to a ball on a tee and keeps swinging until he hits it. In the field stands every player of the opposing team, with little regard for the standard positions worked out by old Abner Doubleday when he invented the game.

The purpose of the game is to teach the young beginners the basic rules; where to run after you hit, how to swing a bat, how and where to throw the ball and other skills of that general level.

No support
Teeball was dropped this year because of lack of support from the parents at the annual meeting held after the season last year. "About 16 people showed up for the meeting" according to Marg Glenn, president of the AMBA. The same number of people attended a second meeting

this spring. The executive voted to drop the tee-ball teams for a year to see how it worked out. Now that it is gone, some parents would like to see it back. The opinion of the executive seems to be that tee-ball does little good in producing players. They don't learn to face a pitched ball and "coaches have to retrain them to watch and hit a pitch" according to Mrs. Glenn.

So, tee-ball is out for the season, and some are glad to see it go. Nancy Hagan, coach of one of the Grasshopper teams in the area, is one of them. "I don't think this year has hurt any," she said. She added that, coming out of a tee-ball league, "a lot of kids are scared to hit off the pitch. They are used to standing up and hitting at a sitting target, and can't adjust to having a ball thrown at them."

She also pointed out that players who don't make an atom rep team used to be dropped back into tee-ball, where they learned nothing more to help them improve. This season, with Grasshopper teams formed, they still face a pitcher and have a better chance to make a rep team next year if they try again.

Want baseball
Mrs. Hagan believes the players want to play baseball, while the parents want them to play tee-ball. "My five year old wants to play baseball, and the kids on the team

like baseball," she said. Lack of interest on parents' part was pointed out by nearly everybody the Free Press talked to. "There's not a whole lot of parent participation," said Mrs. Hagan. It takes eight people to run a tee-ball league; four coaches and four helpers. "We have a hard enough time getting coaches," said Mrs. Glenn.



JUST TURNED SIX, John Ford likes playing Grasshopper ball, but when he was given a chance to play tee-ball, "that was great" according to his mother. There was more action and more chance to do something in a tee-ball game, he thought.

Some parents and coaches, however, think tee-ball is worthwhile. Mrs. John Ford, whose son plays in the grasshopper league, says, "I find the smaller age group, when they're out on the field, they just stand there."

Ball games at the grasshopper level tend to consist mainly of walks, or if the pitcher manages to get the ball across the plate, strikeouts. Very little hitting goes on, and even less fielding.

"There's too much to learn all at once," said Mrs. J. V. Woolley, whose son Brent also plays in grasshoppers. "because they're trying to hit the ball from pitchers who can't pitch, and at the same time learning where to run and how to field."

She concedes that the grasshoppers have learned a lot, but feels "For little kids there should be a year of tee-ball first."

Bob Paul, coach of the Nellis construction atom boys, says he can see a difference between atom teams who played tee-ball and those who didn't. "We can catch

and hit. Leagues with no tee-ball can't hit or catch."

Hardball faster
He also says that "tee-ball is alright for baseball, not softball." The softball makes the games much slower, simply because it is heavier. "Tee-ball worked quite well about four years ago when they used a hardball," he said.

Henry Harbers has two sons playing grasshopper ball this season. One of them, Billy, played tee-ball last year. "Billy's more advanced than the ones who didn't play any tee-ball," according to Mr. Harbers.

The main objection to tee-ball seems to be that it doesn't teach players to hit a pitch, and when they come up against a pitcher, they have to be retrained. But, starting a

player off against a pitcher without giving him the fundamentals of a good swing first is making it even harder for him. If a player knows some of the basics when he starts, he will be in a much better position to learn quickly when he faces someone throwing a ball at him, and should develop into a good hitter faster.

One of the concerns voiced by many parents is the possible danger involved when a five year old, never having played the game, is playing against eight and nine-year-olds in grasshopper. Younger players often go into daydreams out on the field, and one could easily be hit by a ball off the bat of an older child who was cut from atom or squirt play.

This was always true, however, even in tee-ball. "In other years, 13-year-olds played with 6-year-olds," said Mrs. Glenn. "This year we've tried to end this. Each team is evenly balanced."

Players not making atoms are still dropped down into grasshopper, but the problem is no worse than it was in other years.

Having fun
Everything written so far presumes that the purpose of a minor baseball association is to produce good baseball players. No thought has been given to the question of having fun. Do the kids want to play baseball, or would they rather play tee-ball and have some action?

The answer would seem to be that at least a little tee-ball is what they want. Both Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Woolley reported that their sons, given a single game of tee-ball, "liked it best!"

It is possible that the kids are being organized a bit too young. "Atoms, at eight and nine, are just barely old enough," to play ball, according to Bob Paul. One person theorized that the organization starts players so young because parents want their kids to play, either because of their own pride or simply because they want the kids out of the way to do some shopping.

The organization itself concentrates on competitive playing. "What we try to do is cater mostly for children. The house league and the rep teams are the division between fun and serious play," said Mrs. Glenn. There looks like a good balance, but "we concentrate on rep teams because they represent all Acton."

The return of tee-ball depends on the interest of the parents. About 60 players register each year, according to Mrs. Glenn, and for them to become teams they need support and help from parents.

There will be a general meeting at the end of the season, and if parents want tee-ball next year, they will have to show up and fight for it. "If they do, it (bringing back tee-ball) will be taken into consideration," Mrs. Glenn reports.

High purse at Greenwood

August 6 is the date of the highest purse offered this year at Greenwood as the three-year-olds and upward take to the track for the \$75,000 Maple Leaf Trotting Classic.

As a warm up to that, tonight will see one of two runnings of the \$10,000 Standardbred Futurity Stakes this week, this one for two-year-olds. Trot fans will be able to watch another running of the Ontario Sires stakes tomorrow evening while the second Standardbred Futurity Stakes pace goes off Friday, a \$10,000 pace for three-year-old fillies.

On swim team at Canada games

Alan Swanston of R. R. 3, Rockwood, has been chosen to be a member of the Ontario swim team at the Canada Games in St. Johns, Newfoundland, later this month. He competed in Ottawa a few weeks ago for a place on the team and just recently learned he has been accepted.

He goes on to training camp Sunday for a week and then leaves for the east August 13. He returns August 20, just in

time to start a position as a camp counsellor.

Alan, who is 18, has received many swim awards in the last couple of years. He swims with the Guelph Aquatic club.

Like other team members, he will receive white pants and a red jacket to wear at official ceremonies during the games.

His parents are Walter and Virena Swanston.

Victorious Vans widen lead in week's industrial league play

Vans Welding continued to dominate the industrial softball league as they took a pair of victories this week, tripping up Family Cleaners Thursday 8-3 and getting revenge on Halton Hills Electric 12-4 Monday.

In other industrial action Monday, J&T Sports got back on the winning track with a 10-3 win over Station and Family Cleaners edged Halton Hills Catering 12-9 in a slugger duel to end the day.

All teams had trouble filling out their rosters Monday as players were slow in returning from the holiday weekend.

Pilgrim wins
Ken Pilgrim was the winning pitcher, striking out only four but getting good support in the field. Pilgrim walked only one batter in the game.

John Dunn homered for the losers to drive in two runs in the first inning. Cleaners' final tally came in the fourth on hits by Bill Shannon and Dave Paul.

Vans benefitted from a five run outburst in the fourth as Danny Allen, Ed Hillier, Steve Marshall, Al Avery and Ken Pilgrim scored in the inning.

The Welders' tight defense continued to hold in their rematch with Halton Hills Electric. The Electricians had dumped Vans twice last week, but couldn't repeat the feat this time. They scored twice in the second inning and once in the third, but were shut out by winner Alex Ward from that point on. Vans scored seven times on 14 hits in the last two innings as their bats found the range against loser Don Archibald.

The Electricians went down in order the last two innings. Ward and his knuckleball struck out three from the Electric squad, walking two and hitting one other batter. Losing pitcher Don Archibald also struck out three.

Score twice
Station Hotel scored twice to open their game with J&T, but chucker Frank Daley held them scoreless from then until the last inning to ensure the win. J&T sent

three men across the plate in each of the first three innings to pile up a quick 9-2 lead.

Denzo Height was the loser, giving up ten runs before being replaced by Ken Hurren, who shut out the Sportsmen for the rest of the game. Occasional winds were a big factor in the game as they forced many fielding

mistakes in the early innings. J&T collected 13 hits in the game, 12 of them off Height while Station notched up 11, although they were unable to put them together into points for most of the game.

In control
Loser Brian Lawrence was in control of the Cleaners-Caterers contest until the last

three innings, when the Cleaners erupted for 11 of their 12 runs. They connected for 12 hits in the three innings and added three walks to account for their markers. Chris Tennant was the winning pitcher.

Vans, with their two wins, opened up a four point lead over J&T Sports and Halton

Hills Catering. The Welders' record is at 11-5 while J&T and Catering hold identical 9-6 counts. Electric is eight points off the pace with a 7-9 record. Cleaners are right behind at 6-9, and Station brings up the rear with a 4-11 mark.

J&T face Station Hotel this Thursday, and if they win

twice, they can move into a tie for first.

	Standings			
	W	L	P	RF
Vans	11	5	22	136
J&T	9	6	18	137
Cat.	9	6	18	113
Elec.	7	9	14	122
Clean	6	9	12	151
Station	4	11	8	115



PLEASE DON'T TAG ME: Station's Bill Boyd was almost to third base before he decided he shouldn't have tried for it. He dug in the brakes and was easily tagged out by J & T Sports' third sacker Ron Nicolucci. Armand Steeves in background prepares to make on of the easiest calls he had to make all game. Sportsmen won the Monday encounter by a wide 12-3 margin over last place Station. Industrial play continues Thursday.

Monarchs open playoffs with big win

Acton Monarchs, the bantam lacrosse team, are making themselves a royal pain for the rest of the teams in their league in their first season of league play.

They finished the year in top spot with a 9-1 record, and began their playoff action last night by easily beating the Kitchener Chippewas, the only team to defeat the Monarchs in regular season play.

Final score of the rough game, played in Kitchener, was 14-6 for the Monarchs, behind six goal performances from both Peter Hurdle and Peter Turkosz. Mike Marshall and Lorenzo Civero each netted one shot to round out the Monarchs' scoring.

Tied 3-3
The game was tied 3-3 after one period of play, and Acton opened up a lead of only 7-5 in the second. It was in the final frame that the Monarchs

"walked away from them" according to coach Bob Turkosz.

Peter Turkosz and Peter Hurdle made the difference according to Turkosz, as the Monarchs were hampered by having only nine players, losing the rest to vacation trips.

Playoff action for the red-hot Monarchs continues tonight when they face the third place Kitchener Frontenacs at the Acton Community

Centre at 8 p.m. for the second game of their round-robin playoffs.

Final standings in the six team local league showed Acton in front with a 9-1 record, the Kitchener Chippewas right behind at 8-2, the Kitchener Frontenacs in third with a 6-4 mark, Guelph in fourth with an even 5-5 record, Elmira in fifth at 2-8 and the Kitchener Crows folded.

The Acton senior lacrosse team has arranged two exhibition games with Huntsville for the next two weeks, in a home and home series. Final date for the Acton game has not been set, but will be

announced in next weeks paper.

One of the organizers, Bob Turkosz, said "Anybody wanting to play Senior lacrosse should come out to the arena Thursday at 7:30."

Senior lacrosse arranges exhibitions