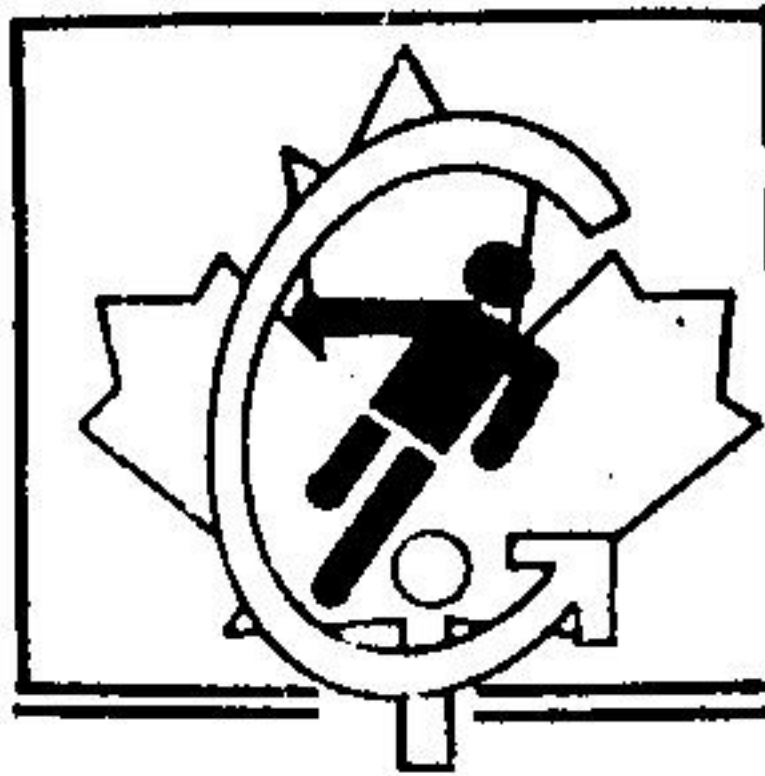




Mark Clairmont
Sports Editor



Soccer
Talk with Alex Tough

**Warm and sunny
for Blue Jay
opener?**

With the unusual winter weather we experienced this winter it is as refreshing as a slap of fresh spring air in the face to know that the fourth home season opener for the American (baseball) League's Toronto Blue Jays will be without the cold and snow of previous ones.

I remember the first big league ball game in Toronto three years ago. I was there. It was a cold snowy blistery day, more gramatically appropriate for the opener of the soccer's Blizzard team.

The Jays were playing the Chicago White Sox, ironically enough. Baseball Commissioner Bowie Kuhn and American League President Lee McPhail were there and over 40,000 new fans.

My father, Hugh, who has been a baseball nut all of his life dating back to the old Toronto Maple Leafs of the International League, when it operated out of Maple Leaf Stadium, took me down. He used to skip school to attend all those openers. I had been to only one other major league ball game before. That too was with him at the Maple Leaf stadium, before they tore it down a few years back.

HISTORIC SPORTS DAY



Down on the field level, before that historic Toronto sports day in 1977, there were hundreds of cold people. The 50 plus American players and management from the two teams just back from the sunny climes of the U.S. were busily getting ready for another home opener while still trying to laugh off the conditions which they were probably praying would not be the norm here in coming years.

There were snowball games and players using catchers' knee pads for skis and bats for poles as they skied across the snowcovered astro-turf.

I was getting a frostbitten fore-finger taking pictures while my father, wrapped in a 70-pound buffalo skin coat was getting bear hugs from the players.

It was such an enjoyable day, especially with the Jays winning, despite the weather. That day I became a dedicated baseball fan. Up to then I had played and loved softball, since in the small town of Gravenhurst where I was born, raised and may die, baseball was not the game.

So this Monday I'll be there to keep up what has now become a spring ambition for me.

The Jays will be playing against the Milwaukee Brewers, a team I have seen but once since they started coming to town. They are a good team and should prove to be a formidable opponent for the Toronto team.

REGGIE JACKSON

I have seen many of the teams, including the World Series champs, the New York Yankees at Exhibition stadium. Normally when I go I stand down on the field just off first or third base in the press photographers' dugout, where the action is closer and faster. This is next to the players' dugout. It is like being behind the Toronto Maple Leaf hockey bench. To see Reggie Jackson walk by within a few feet is a baseball fan's thrill. It is even better being able to go into the club house after to interview the players.

Occasionally I will follow the team to Detroit to report on them. A few years ago I saw them play a couple of games there. The second game I saw Mark Fidrych (the Bird) pitch.

Such is the life of a sport writer. That is how I intend to be able to let our readers follow the Jays, through my personal insight, that does not come in the regular Toronto dailies.

Mosquitos to meet Blizzards

Here is some exciting news to begin - Georgetown vs Acton at Mosquito level, precedes the Toronto Blizzard vs Washington, North American Soccer League match at Exhibition stadium on Sunday, April 27. The teams will be presented to the players and act as ball persons during the 'big' game.

For the first time, we will present a "Player of the Week" award throughout the season, with a couple of Blizzard tickets thrown in for good measure. Regrettably this is the weekend of the Guelph tournament and our competitive teams are in action on the Saturday and Sunday, except minor atom and senior girls, and will not be able to go.

I would like to see a few Blizzard visits on a club basis. In August the Blizzard are conducting a clinic in Georgetown, the day before a league game in Toronto, and we are promised a few of the first team that day. We are also trying to have the reserve team down to play the Senior Falcons!

REGISTRATION

We have over 850 registrations for the coming season which is very healthy. There are fewer boys and more girls; with a fair number showing interest in the over 18 ladies fun section. We will be drafting the teams during the last week in April, with boot exchange and jacket sale on 19th and 26th April.

Sadly, there is a major problem in organizing the girls league. One of last year's partner clubs is proving difficult in clearing their portion of the running expenditures. This matter is to be pursued at a higher level and it appears we may be without some of the competition of last year.

ASST. COACH WANTED

Mini soccer organization is underway, with two Ballinacorney teams coming in. We can accommodate all 95 registered players; we have room for 5 more players. Dave Manning, the mini organizer requires coaching assistance and can be reached at 877-8874.

Weekend TV shows have an abundance of soccer these days, a vast change over prior years. One channel said this was a new era, and it is fitting that locally we introduce mini-soccer, coaching and referee clinics, inter-club competition and maintain the girls soccer.

Our executive this season: President - Alex Tough, secretary - Phil Winer, 9486, treasurer - Dave Manning 8874, registrar - Colin and June Wilde 2554, competitive teams - Pat Johnston 1259, girls teams - Jean Belshaw 8353, ladies teams - Des Rafferty 7803, equipment -

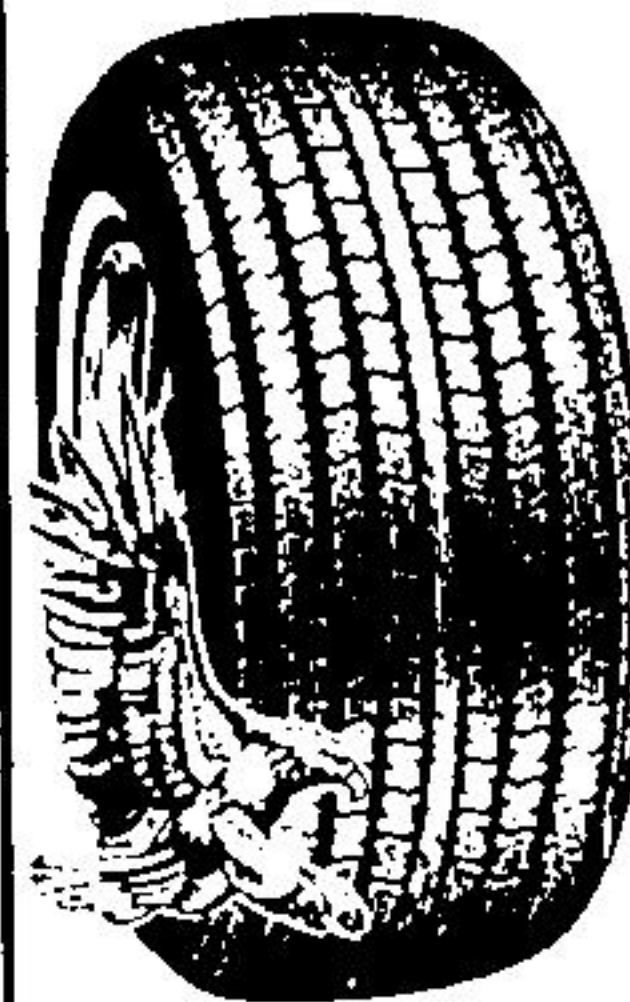
Erwin Gross 8263, referees - Elaine Bertrand 8353, senior boys - Courtney Warner 4642. Future dates - Boot Exchange April 19 and 26; Draft April 21-25; Referee Clinic May 4 and 11; Opening Day and Dance May 24.

See you around, folks.



**Centennial
Invitational
tournament
Saturday**

Wrestlers from across Central Ontario will be trying to upset the 30 hosts of the Centennial Invitational, who have won the meet the past six of the seven years it has been held. Action goes all day and is free.

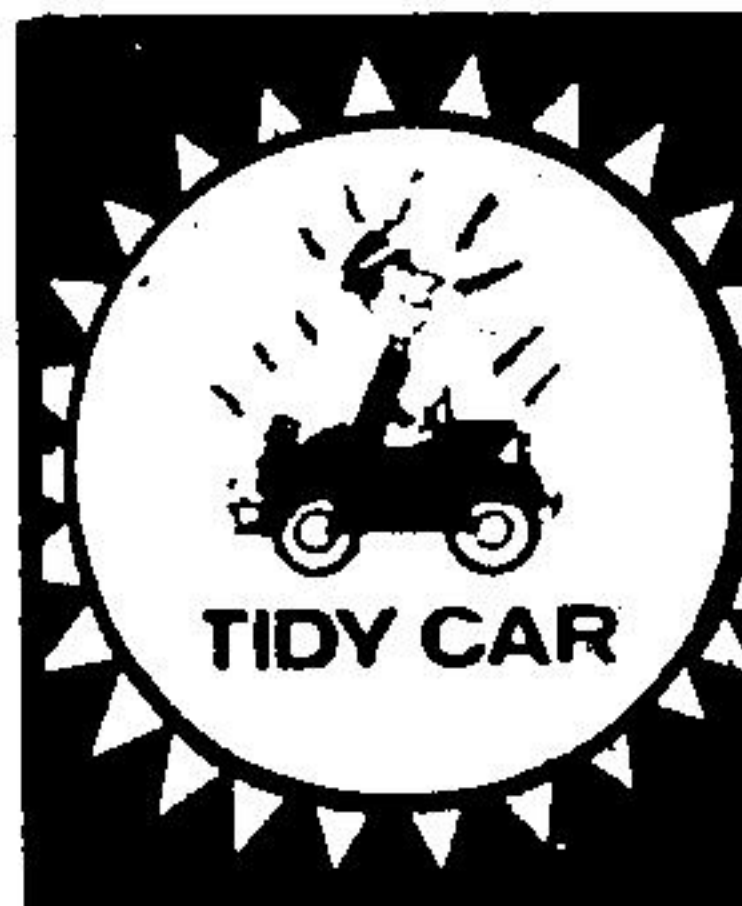


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