

SPORTS & LEISURE

Rowe book details town's sports history

By **EAMONN MAHER**
Staff Writer

A book chronicling nearly two centuries of Halton Hills's sporting past may surprise readers with some of its revelations.

Bats, Balls & Sticks, The History of Sports in Halton Hills was written by local author Mark Rowe and took two-and-a-half years to compile, covering a number of athletic activities that most people likely haven't even heard of.

Commissioned by the Halton Hills Sports Museum & Resource Centre (HHSMRC), the book devotes full chapters to mainstays such as baseball, lacrosse and hockey, yet it's notable that it took a few decades before the latter took hold as the favourite sport.

"The sports that we have enjoyed here in Halton Hills have changed completely over the years, with hockey, as our national sport, becoming number one in popularity by far," said Rowe.

"But it wasn't always that way. Organized hockey didn't really get going until the early 1900s and actually cricket was widespread in our area before the First World War. There were such a wide variety of sports to look at for the book. Something called quoit, which was sort of a precursor to horseshoes except that they used ropes instead, had a big following too. There would be periods of time when baseball would be most popular, then for a few years, lacrosse would take over. It's interesting to see how these things have gone in cycles."

Mostly through researching newspaper archives, Rowe's findings stretch back to the 1820s when pioneers would take part in "skill games," although it would not be until the latter 19th century when formal clubs and leagues were established.

The first documented sporting activities were recorded in the 1840s with curling, pleasure skating and shinny taking place on numerous mill ponds in the area, along with extremely popular plowing matches and high-stakes horse races, which were held at the Georgetown Driving Park, now known as The Fairgrounds. Target shooting, baseball, lacrosse, football (soccer) and even cricket, which was introduced by British troops in the 1850s, would follow.

A links course was set up on land owned by Beardmore & Co. of Acton in 1901 and the sport was dubbed a "craze" after golfers were seen playing in pouring rain. Hockey also took hold near the turn of the 20th century, although the First World War would bring many recreational and organized activities to a halt.

The book, which covers the evolution of sports in Halton Hills to current day, retails for \$24.95 and can be purchased at the Sports Museum, Coles in the Georgetown Market Place, What the Dickens & Curios in Acton or at the Reeve & Clarke Book Store in Glen Williams.

Rowe, a retired teacher who is currently the local trustee for the Halton Catholic District School Board, has written several books pertaining to the history of Halton Hills including *Acton: The History of Leathertown* (2002) and *Georgetown: Reflections of a Small Town* (2006).



On hand for the launch of Mark Rowe's (front) book detailing the town's sporting history were HHSMRC members, from left, Glenda Nixdorf, Finn Poulstrup, Bruce Andrews, Brian Snow and Steve Foreman.

Photo by Eamonn Maher

The official book launch will take place Sunday (Nov. 13) at the Sports Museum, located in the Gordon Alcott Heritage Hall at the Mold-Masters SportsPlex.

Celebrating its second anniversary, the Sports Museum will also unveil a new exhibit called "Halton Hills Hockey Achievers" alongside the book launch. Admission is free.

For more info, visit www.hhsm.ca.

Georgetown's Montag in middle of Yates mayhem for Mac

By **EAMONN MAHER**
Staff Writer

The 104th edition of the Yates Cup this Saturday is shaping up to be a thriller and Georgetown's Elliott Montag will literally be in the middle of the gridiron mayhem.

For the 6-foot-2, 280-pound centre for the McMaster Marauders, it's his first trip to the Ontario University Athletics championship football game, with the Western Mustangs, who will make their fifth-consecutive Yates Cup appearance, providing the opposition.

Game time is 1 p.m. in London and it will be broadcast on *The Score*.

Montag is in his third year at Mac, but it's his first full season as a starter and he's been a steady force on the Marauders' offensive line, getting named to the OUA's second all-star team this past week.

The kinesiology major was honoured by the all-star selection, but is now more con-

cerned with avenging the lone loss of the campaign so far for McMaster, a 48-21 thrashing by the Mustangs on Sept. 10 in Hamilton.

"I had some expectations for myself on how things would go, and now to be playing for one of the oldest trophies in North America, it's been an amazing year so far," said the former Christ the King Jaguar star.

"We haven't lost since they beat us in week two and things have



ELLIOTT MONTAG

Photo by John Rennison, Hamilton Spectator

changed a lot in two months. We had a lot of first-year starters and we weren't quite ready. Coach (Stefan Ptaszek) wants us to make a statement this week and as an offensive line, we need to keep their offence off the field because they've got a huge running game. So we'll just have to do what we do best and that's making room for our running backs and letting (McMaster quarterback) Kyle Quinlan do his thing."

Western is also 8-1 entering the contest

and ranked third in the country, with the Marauders seeded fourth. The Mustangs, whose quarterback, Donnie Marshall, has missed the last month due to injury, also beat McMaster in last year's OUA semifinals 34-28 after the Marauders had led 28-13 at one point.

"(The Mustangs) are beaten up just like we were last year and now it's time to return the favour," said the 20-year-old Montag.

Mustangs' running back John Leckie of Georgetown would have played in his fifth Yates Cup this Saturday, but has been a spectator after suffering a torn ACL in a game against Waterloo on Labour Day. The 22-year-old could return to play for his final year of eligibility for Western next season thanks to an injury exemption as he's pursuing a Master's degree in kinesiology.

Another GDHS graduate, quarterback Spencer Kardash, is in his first year with the Mustangs in the engineering program.

STAYING HOME THIS WEEKEND?... SHOP LOCAL



Shopping local saves you money. Out of town shops have done a good job of convincing us all that sole traders = expensive, but the evidence just isn't there to back this up. If you add in travel, parking costs, fees to transport larger items home and your time, the overall cost is often much higher. SHOP LOCAL, SHOP HALTON HILLS!

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