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Fastball ladies look to championship play

BY DOUG HARRISON

The Acton Tanner

With 12 of 13 Acton Ladies' Fastball players returning to the fold this year and 1992 regular season champs Glen Williams folding, the local outfit has a legitimate shot to reach the final for the second straight campaign.

But there are some lingering question marks.

Will new entry Bolton feature an All-Star lineup and push the locals for a top three finish in the five-team loop?

Will Acton be able to make the attitude adjustment from practice-mode to games?

And will offensive stalwart sisters, Suzie and Boo Tufford, have banner seasons and carry the team in run production?

The answers? Who knows. But so far, it looks promising.

The team is currently 1-1 coming off a season-opening 16-15 edging of Caledon East and a 9-5 loss to rival Georgetown, who swept them in three straight during last year's final.

As mentioned, gone is Glen Williams and also Hillsburgh. Enter the aforementioned Bolton club.

"It's definitely a key having the same players back and everyone wanting to play," states third-year player Diane Hancock. "You have to start out strong in this league because the season's so short (16

games) that if you lose the first few games, it's hard to gain it back later in the year."

Hancock added that although the league is small, there's plenty of parity.

As for a continuing rivalry with Georgetown?

"There's always been a rivalry between us, especially in high school sports," says the utility player, whose team will also battle Cheltenham for a playoff berth. "They have a good pitcher this year who's played in a higher league in (talent laden) Chinguacousy."

The Acton Ladies, who play two games a week with Tuesday designated as home night, range in age from 18-35 with most in their mid-20s in the open age league.

"I've always liked baseball and I'm glad it's still around Acton. It's good knowing your teammates and having a good time," says Hancock.

Hancock feels a productive season by pitchers Mel Spear and Cindy Hallimand will hopefully ensure a playoff berth. Offensively, Hancock looks to Suzie and Boo Tufford, who play second and third base, respectively.

"I think the only weakness is the players getting the kinks straightened out and realizing the attitude of a practice differs from a game," Hancock explains.



WATER WIZARDS: The Acton Aqua Ducks swim club travelled to the new recreation centre in Milton recently to compete against six other swim clubs from Mississauga and St. Catharines. Back row, left to right are, Gareth Lichty, Mike Lenizky, Kara MacDonald, Caitlin Lichty (on ladder) and Stephen McKeon-Foley (on ladder). Middle row, Nick Pliotas, Roshini Kassie, Julie Pliotas, Alexandra Bull and Joel MacDonald. Front row, Steven Potterton, Amanda Potterton, Jaime MacDonald, Laura Tummonds and Sylvia Bragg-Smith. Stacey Moore is laying down. (Doug Harrison photo)

Ambrose directs AHS Ladies softballers to third win

BY DOUG HARRISON

The Acton Tanner

The Burlington Lord Elgin Ladies' Softball team couldn't solve either the directions to M.Z. Bennett last Wednesday or the pitching arsenal of Acton High starter Kelly Ambrose.

Intending to make a turn at Hwy. 25 and Steeles Ave., three Elgin players (pitcher Lindsay Baldwin, centre-fielder Jenn Yates and her sister Nicole) and head coach Neil Curtis botched the directions to Acton and ended up in Toronto.

They finally arrived here after the fourth inning. However, their team's pitching unravelled after the second frame and Elgin, fielding a depleted lineup of eight players, was down 9-4.

Ambrose, who had her fastball humming, gave up an unearned run in the first as normally sound shortstop Lindsay Holmes booted two routine grounders. But Acton rebounded with a seven-run third en route to their third straight win, this time 9-6.

Elgin starter Corri Brown, who threw three innings, gave up no runs, a single hit, walked two and struck out seven and had Acton players swatting at a blurred ob-

ject to set the tone for an early pitching showdown.

The Burlington squad jumped out to an early 4-1 lead in the second as Giselle Jones belted a towering drive to centre off Ambrose for a two-run triple that scored Michelle Skelley and Laura Lindsay. However, the ball eluded Acton catcher Mandy Bosch and went out of play to bring home Jones.

Acton second baseman Deanna Louth scored Ruth Tabata and Lindsay Holmes on an infield single in the home half of the seven-run mercy third inning. The visitors inserted losing hurler Nancy Hutson, who was as effective as a five-year-old Duracell battery.

A run-scoring single, double and throwing error later and the home side lead was padded to 8-4.

The visitors couldn't touch Ambrose in the fourth as she mowed down all comers to finish the day with a strong four innings, giving up four runs (one earned), three hits and striking out seven.

"I felt tired at the beginning of the game," admitted Ambrose, who left the game with her team up 9-4, "but it always takes a while to get going when it's cold.

"We've worked a lot on our offence lately and I think we have to work a lot more on our defence."

Elgin got two back in the fifth as Lindsay ripped an RBI-single off Acton reliever Sharon Kearsy to score Brown. Kearsy, though, shut down her opponents the next innings to finish at two innings pitched, allowing three hits, a run and a walk.

Sam Gudgeon closed the game for the locals, serving up a run to go with a strikeout.

Lord Elgin's record dropped to 0-4-2, while Acton climbed to 3-1-1.

"Our team played well and I got to play all but one of my players," said a pleased Acton coach Tom Wright. "On Monday at Nelson (12-2 Acton), there was such good hustle by the girls that we could score on any hit with a runner at second, but today they were just standing at second.

"Elgin's first pitcher (Brown) was so good and the others were so weak, but with this league you know you're only going to face their best pitcher for four of the seven innings. You have to make hay when the sun shines."



OH, SO CLOSE!

Acton High catcher Mandy Bosch slides hard into third base last Wednesday at M.Z. Bennett, but is unable to slip her foot under the tag of Lord Elgin's Giselle Jones. Bosch was the third out of the fourth inning, but Deanna Louth scored on her single earlier in the inning. Acton won 9-6 in the Ladies Softball match. (Doug Harrison photo)