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League transfer, girls' hardball team among minor ball changes

BY DOUG HARRISON
The Acton Tanner

Tolerate a minor rule change or don't offer softball to Acton youngsters?

That was the dilemma facing Jennifer Wells for the upcoming minor baseball season — which begins May 8 — after the Halton Rural Softball Association folded all but its Tyke division.

The third-year president of Acton Minor Baseball wisely chose the former, so as to not give a bad name to the local organization and save some 150 kids from scurrying to find a diamond to play on in Rockwood, Milton or Georgetown.

And while Wells says entering the Tri-County Softball Association

this year will likely mean playing against higher calibre teams, she isn't sure how to view an alteration in the rules that will see only those nine players on the field bat in one inning, instead of the entire team.

"It almost seems like a select league," allowed Wells, 33, on Monday, adding over 360 kids will play on 31 Acton ball teams. "I don't know how it's going to turn out, but we had no choice — it was that or fold."

"We've lowered our rosters as well, because we don't want to have too many players sitting on the bench and not batting."

Wells, an Owen Sound native, said if playing Tri-County ball doesn't pan out, an effort to resur-

rect the Halton league will be made. Glen Williams and Hornby followed Acton's pursuit to Tri-County, which already boasted teams from Ponsoyby, Puslinch, Silver Heights, Rockwood and Brookville.

Among the other changes to Acton ball this year is the dividing of the T-ball (4 and 5-year-olds) and Grasshopper (6 and 7) leagues, the division of hardball to select and house league, along with the addition of the first-ever girls' hardball team to the Central Ontario Baseball Association (COBA).

There will be four teams in both T-ball and Grasshopper this season, up from two in 1994.

"We found some kids were so advanced than others that we had

to make a move," offered Wells, a seven-year Acton resident. "And the 7-year-olds have the option of going to Tyke or playing another year in Grasshopper."

Only a few spots remain on the various Acton softball teams. The Atom (9 and 10) boys' and Bantam (14 and 15) girls' squads are set, while five girls are still needed to fill out the two Atom girls' clubs. Six players are needed for the two Squirt (11 and 12) teams. And the two Peeewe (13 and 14) units, which were bolstered by the folding of the Limehouse entry, have five open spots.

Acton will field two house league hardball teams in the Rookie (8 and 9) and Midget (16 to 18) divisions. Of the three local Mosquito (10 and 11), two Peeewe (12 and 13) and three Bantam (14 and 15) teams, one in each division will be a select entry.

"If we split the league into house league and select," Wells said, "we'll have better calibre ball and the kids will stay in town (to play)."

The new girls' Junior hardball club, comprised of 15 to 20-year-olds, will battle established teams from Toronto, Dundas, Mississauga and Oakville.

Since she took over as president in 1993, Wells has seen Acton minor ball grow to 31 teams from 13.

"A lot has to do with personnel changes on the executive," she said of the rapid growth. "Plus, we don't turn kids away, and bringing hardball to Acton has helped."

Following is the 1995 executive: Karl Killingbeck, vice-president; secretary Maria Berry; Brad Wells, treasurer; Marg White, bingo co-ordinator; registrar Deb Burgess; Bill Clark, equipment manager; T-ball co-ordinator John Burgess; softball co-ordinator Peter Hargrave; John Ahearn, hardball co-ordinator; newspaper co-ordinator Pat Ethier; and Steve McKnight, facility manager.

Punchless Redmen suffer 3rd shutout

WANTED: A speedy, creative female forward with good ball control skills to generate more scoring chances than the NHL's Ottawa Senators.

If interested, come equipped with cleats, red and white shirt and shorts, and a game face to the Acton high school soccer field at 3:30 pm today (Wednesday) for the Redmen Senior girls' soccer home opener against Appleby College.

Blanked in three of their four exhibition matches, it's no secret the local team is in need of an offensive jolt.

After scoring once in three games at the recent York Yeowomen tourney, it came to a head here last Wednesday when the Redmen were crunched 5-0 by the Georgetown Lady Rebels.

"We only generated two scoring chances all game, so I was disappointed by the score," commented Redmen coach Gary Crocker yesterday (Tuesday). "But there were some circumstantial things that contributed to the loss, like the wind."

The Rebels had the wind at their backs to start the game and took full advantage, building a 4-0 lead by the half.

The Redmen, though able to play even with their opponents after the intermission, were often stationed in their own end just fending off Rebels scoring chances.

Crocker was encouraged by the play of sweeper Shondra Stroud and Desiree Barrett, who looked respectable in her debut as a keeper.

"They (the Rebels) were better prepared than we were,"

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MILTON OPTIMIST CHAMPS!

The Nellis Construction Novice 1 Sabres hockey team ended the 1994-95 season on a winning note recently, capturing the annual Milton Optimist tourney by edging Georgetown 3-2. They amassed a 4-0 tourney record with wins over Brampton, Georgetown and host Milton. Back row, from left to right, is assistant coach Trefor Gardener, trainer Marc Masson, head coach Kent Petty and Rick Boychuk, manager. Middle row: Darryl Wright, Colin Sheehan, Stephen Boychuk, Patrick Sherren, Mark Pawlak, Joe Brunelle and Mike Borg. Front row: Matt Chapman, Daine Kuiken-Rogers, Kyle Strong, Neal Dawkins, Michael Gerrow, Brendan Dick and Matt Gardener. (Submitted photo)



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