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Friday, May 4, 2001



Georgetown District High School Rebels Stacey McCormack had no worries being safe at third as Amie Belanger of Oakville Trafalgar High School had some problems controlling the ball during Tuesday's Halton Secondary School Athletic Association girls fastball action at Georgetown Fairgrounds. After the dust settled, the Rebels had secured an easy 16-0 win. Photo by Ted Brown

Rebels begin their 'drive for five' with easy 16-0 romp over O-T

The Georgetown District High School Rebels began their "drive for five" Tuesday without even having to get out of first gear. The Rebels opened the girls fastball season Tuesday with an easy 16-0 romp over Oakville-Trafalgar as they look for a fifth consecutive Halton Secondary School Athletic Association title. And with few holes on the squad, they will be tough to stop. The Rebels have boasted the strongest pitching in the league for the better part of a decade. Cheryl Mastalerz, now in her fourth season with the team, will again anchor the staff. She showed mid-season form in a tournament in Detroit on the weekend allowing only an unearned run in the seventh inning as Notre Dame Prep, which went on to win the tournament, edged the Rebels 1-0. It's Jenn Lukas who gives the Rebels an advantage over other teams. While most teams can throw one dominating pitcher, few can come at you with two. And that's important with a four-inning limit in high school fastball. Meghan Baldwin and Dana Higgins provide support for now but will step into starting roles in a year or two.

"In ladies fastball, pitching is so important," said Rebels coach Jim Hall. "Having strong pitching lets me fool around with other positions." One position he has been working on is catching. Hall used three players— Aléne Malenfant, Keri Lindsay and April Everingham— behind the plate in the tournament. Lindsay and Everingham formed a solid left side of the infield last year so a move behind the plate could open up another position. The Rebels also showed their prowess at the plate on the weekend. With six rookies, Hall evenly distributed the playing time and the Rebels were still able to put up runs. After the loss to Notre Dame, they defeated Taylor 11-1 and Grosse Isle 7-6. "We're a pretty balanced team," Hall said. An aggressive game on the basepaths has also been a Rebel trademark and although this year's edition isn't as fast as past teams, there are no plans to change their ways. "If we're lacking anything it's speed," Hall said. "But we're still going to hit and run and bunt. There just won't be as many straight steals." The Rebels will host a tournament at the Georgetown Fairgrounds on May 11.

—By Herb Garbutt, staff writer

Volleyball duo have sights set on gold medal

They've been there many times before and while they've come close, the big prize has always eluded them. Jeff Birrell and Taylor Hall hope to change that this week at the Canadian Junior Boys Volleyball Championship in Saskatoon. The two have been to seven national championships at various levels between them and each have won a bronze medal. This time, as members of Oakville's Bronte Beach junior team, they're aiming high. "We're going back setting our sights on gold," said Birrell, who was a member of last year's sixth-place team.



JEFF BIRRELL

The team has certainly established the credentials to believe that's possible. Bronte Beach reeled off 22 straight victories to win a 62-team tournament at Penn State University in January. In March at the Ontario championships, they scored a convincing three-game sweep of Guelph, who beat Bronte Beach in last year's final, to win the Ontario championship.



TAYLOR HALL

"We're strong and we're big," said Birrell, who was the MVP of the tournament. "We can come at a team from all angles. If they're shutting us down outside, we've got two provincial (team) middles who we can go to." The key for Bronte Beach will be shutting down the opposition. "We've been working on our D like crazy," Hall said. "We got one of the best offences so if we can get the defence going we'll be tough to beat." "My first time at nationals we lost in the semifinal," Hall said. "I watched Saskatchewan and Alberta play in the final and it was the best game I've ever seen. They were so much better than everyone else." Hall said he doesn't think that will be the case this year. Although the team has been successful throughout the season, it has rarely had its full lineup together because there were many university players on the team. Birrell said nationals is also a great opportunity for players to showcase their talents. It was his play at nationals that earned him an invitation to the tryouts for the Canadian junior team. Birrell was the final cut last year but he hopes to make a strong impression to help him secure a spot on the team this season.

—By Herb Garbutt, staff writer

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