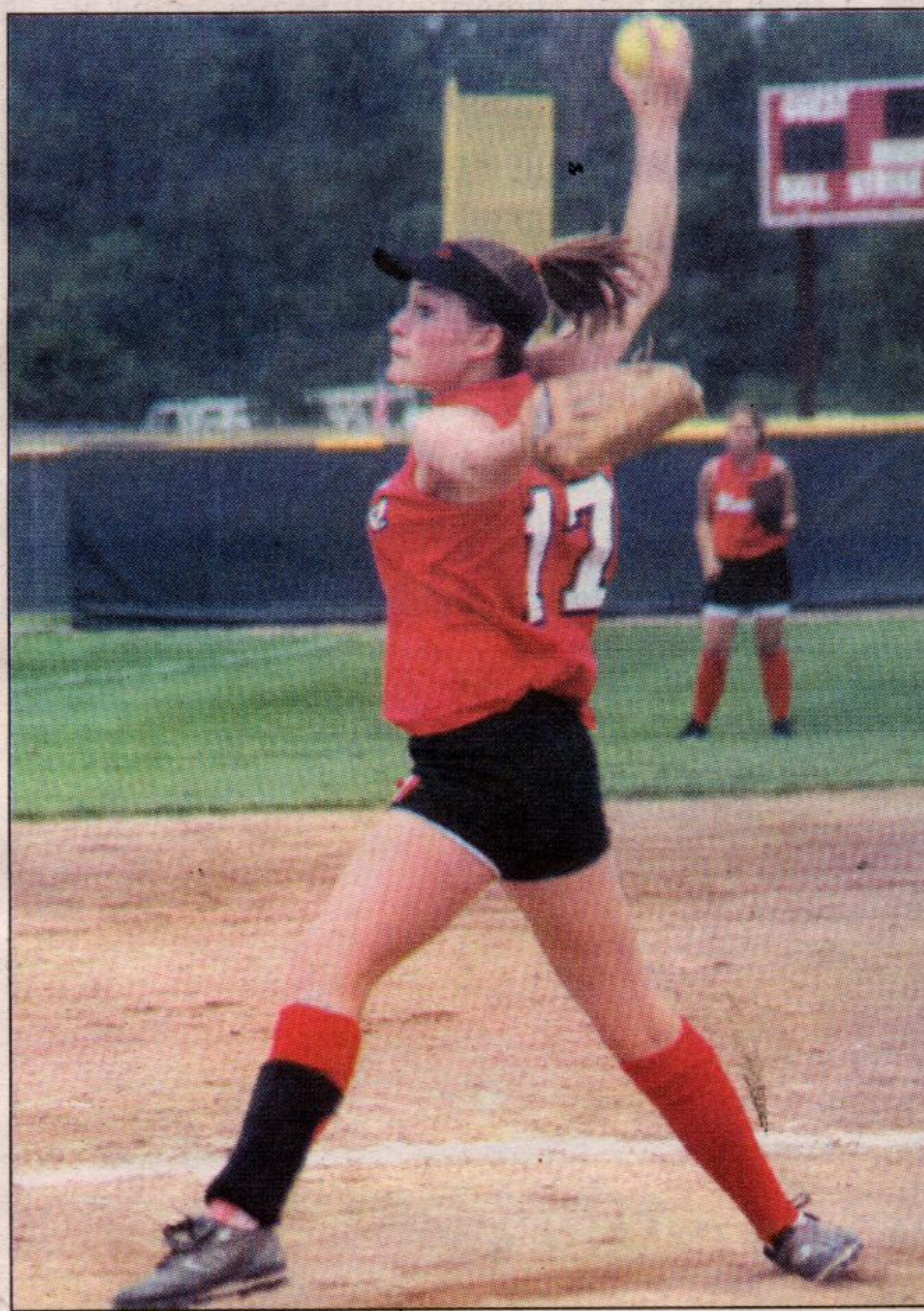


Sports & Leisure

Friday, May 7, 2004

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Amanda Hole (left) and Casey Ferguson have been named to the Canadian team that will play in Cup 2005 in Holland. They were selected from 750 players who tried out at Kent State University earlier this year. Cup 2005 is an international tournament that features several countries' national teams.

Local softballers to represent Canada

They formed a battery for several years for the Halton Hills Hawks, now they hope to give Canada a charge overseas.

Amanda Hole and Casey Ferguson will represent Canada at Cup 2005, an international softball tournament that will be held in Holland in January.

Hole and Ferguson were selected from among 750 players at a tryout camp at Kent State University in Ohio earlier this year.

The two have a long history together, moving through the Hawks system together and were also teammates on the Christ the King Jaguars high school team.

For the tryout camp, which attracts scouts from many American colleges, players were divided into teams and played off against one another. Hole ended up with one of the teams that played at the Cup 2004 tournament. While that gave her a good indication of what she would need to do, it did leave some doubts about making the final cut.

"When I got there and saw the caliber of players I wasn't sure. When I found out (I had made it) I was really excited."

While the North American teams send junior squads to the tournament, most European nations send their national teams. That means they could be facing players as old as 40 who have been playing the game longer

than they've been alive.

"It's going to be strange playing out of our age group but I think it's going to be fun," said the 17-year-old Ferguson. "If you're going up against a girl with that much experience and you can strike her out, that would be great."

Hole, 16, has also played shortstop but prefers working behind the plate.

"You get to control the field and you can see the whole field and everything that's going on."

Likewise, Ferguson has played first base but will concentrate solely on pitching for the Canadian team.

Both players will be able to work on their skills during the season but the challenge will be remaining sharp for a tournament in January.

Ferguson has been working out with the help of Lawrence Fisher at Atlantis Fitness, to improve her strength and conditioning.

Hole said she was hitting the ball very well at the tryout but says she still needs work on her bat speed and has been going to batting cages to face pitches faster than she would usually see.

Both players are also looking for sponsorships to help offset the cost of the trip. Anyone interested in sponsoring them should contact Debbie Hole at 905-877-6919 or Sue Wilson at 905-877-7697.

—By Herb Garbutt, staff writer

Hawks' eighth spring tourney opens tonight

The Halton Hills Hawks will swoop down to take over local diamonds this weekend.

The Hawks' 8th Annual Spring Tournament, now one of the largest in Canada, opens tonight (Friday). Fifty teams will compete for nine division championships. In total there will 122 games played over three days at the tournament headquarters at the Georgetown Fairgrounds as well as Gellert Community Park, Hornby and Glen Williams.

There will be both Tier I and II divisions for squirt, novice, bantam and midget as well as a Tier II mite division.

Tournament director Rich Besworth said the tournament is a good early season indication of where teams stand.

"Some of the teams coming are trying to figure out if they're Tier I or Tier II before they have to declare which they are going to play. If a team comes in and wins Tier II, they might decide to go Tier I."

There will be a food booth and prize table set up at the Georgetown Fairgrounds.

Schedules for the four local entries are:

Mite Hawks

6:30 p.m. Friday vs. Brampton, Fairgrounds F
 9:45 a.m. Saturday vs. Oshawa, Fairgrounds F
 11:30 a.m. Saturday vs. Oakville, Fairgrounds F

Squirt Hawks

6:30 p.m. Friday vs. Mississauga North, GS3
 8 a.m. Saturday vs. Markham, Fairgrounds E
 11:30 a.m. Saturday vs. Aurora, Fairgrounds E

Novice Hawks

8:15 p.m. Friday vs. Aurora, Hornby Lower
 3 p.m. Saturday vs. Guelph, Fairgrounds D
 6:30 p.m. Saturday vs. Brampton, Fairgrounds D

Bantam Hawks

6:30 p.m. Friday vs. Mississauga SW, Fairgrounds C
 8 a.m. Saturday vs. Brampton, Glen Williams 2
 1:15 p.m. Saturday vs. St. Catharines, Fairgrounds C
 8:15 p.m. Saturday vs. Newmarket, Fairgrounds C

Palichuk places fifth

Stephanie Palichuk of Georgetown earned two medals and fifth all-around at the Elite Ontario Provincial Gymnastics Championships in Sarnia.

Palichuk, who competes out of Futures Gymnastics in Mississauga, earned a mark of 9.10 to win the silver medal on beam in the open 3 division. She also won a bronze medal on floor with a score of 9.35 and scored a 9.30 on bars to place sixth.



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