

SPORTS & LEISURE



To catch a thief

Acton High School Bearcats' baserunner Anthony Gilbert became airborne as he stole a base while Christ the King Jaguars third baseman Ben Merchant took the throw during high school baseball action last week at Georgetown Fairgrounds. The Jaguars won the contest 13-7.

Photo by Ted Brown

Jr. B club opens season Thursday Rookie-laden lineup doesn't worry 'Dogs

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Staff Writer

Several rookies are expected to make their debut for the Halton Hills Jr. B Bulldogs when the Ontario Lacrosse Association regular season gets under way this Thursday against Oakville at the Alcott Arena and according to the team's general manager, that should not be a reason for concern.

With goalkeeper Kyle Kennery closing out his Bulldog career last summer with a valiant first-round playoff effort against the eventual national Jr. B champion Oakville Buzz, Halton Hills GM Mike Hancock has also passed on his best wishes to leading offensive contributors Cameron Flint and Travis Bland, who will move on to the Jr. A ranks of the Brampton and Kitchener-Waterloo clubs, respectively.

However, Hancock says a flourishing Halton Hills youth lacrosse organization, along with top overage midgets from Brampton, have provided the Jr. B squad with many difficult decisions to make as training camp winds down and there's plenty of cause for optimism with the Bulldogs' outlook. Three members of the 2006 Founders Cup national champion Oakville Buzz have also joined the Dogs to bolster a lineup with 11 returnees, and talented lefty Evan Whillans has come over from the team's Jr. A affiliate Brampton Excelsiors.

"This has been our most competitive camp by a long way and I expect us to be even more skilled this year than last year because of some of the kids who are moving up from the Halton Hills midget team," noted Hancock, mentioning J.J. Laforet, Adam McGourty, Daniel Patterson, Nic Spence and Kyle Andrews as standouts in the pre-season. "We wish we had 35 spots on the team

because there are probably about 30 kids that we've seen who could play Jr. B anywhere in Ontario, but unfortunately we can't keep that many."

Second-year head coach Blaine McCauley guided his club to a runner-up finish at an exhibition tournament in St. Catharines last month, edged by the host Spartans 5-3 in the final. Despite Kennery's graduation, goaltending doesn't appear to be a worry for the Dogs as three proven plugs have emerged in training camp. Michael Cregan will miss five games for the Bulldogs when he represents Ireland at the world indoor championships in May, so Hancock found reinforcements in Oakville's backup Spencer Robson and the rookie Spence.

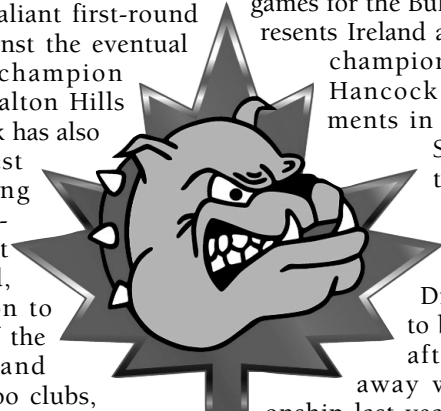
The playing field in the OLA Jr. B's South East Division is expected to be tightly contested after Oakville ran away with the championship last year, as a poor home record in 2006 resulted in the 10-10 Bulldogs' meeting with the dominant Buzz.

"I can't remember a year where every team is thinking that they've got a shot at winning this division," added Hancock. "I think it's wide open. Mimico should be strong but I think we can play at their level. It's just going to be a matter of whose kids can overachieve and learn how to be successful. I wouldn't be surprised if there are a handful of teams in the mix."

Back for another season with the Bulldogs are Nic Grasby, Braden Artem, Alex Dube, Brad Ethier, Tim Laidlaw, Matt Laidlaw, Matt Velten, Brandon Goodfellow, Mike Brown, Casey McDonald and Greg Henry. Also coming over from Oakville are Nik Matwieszyn and Reed Board, while Joe De'Athe was acquired from Milton.

Brampton overage midgets Brendan Clarke, Kyle Davis and Troy

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Badminton teams in OFSAA action

Two boys' doubles teams from Halton Hills will be in Waterloo this week for the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations badminton championships after successful showings at the recent Golden Horseshoe-area qualifier.

The Acton High School duo of Mike Kosziwka and Sanford Mick registered a 3-0 record along the way to claiming the GHAC senior boys' title at E.C. Drury in Milton.

Kosziwka teamed with Holly Bigg last year to win the OFSAA C mixed doubles title.

Mark Walkington and Ian Buist of the Georgetown Rebels took a longer route to earn their OFSAA berth.

The second-year seniors dropped their second

match at GHAC and were pushed to the consolation side of the draw in the double-knockout tourney, eventually beating the Halton champs from M.M. Robinson of Burlington for the second qualifying spot for provincials, posting a 5-1 record.

Ironically, the same M.M. Robinson team denied Walkington and Buist a trip to last year's OFSAA tourney.

The Acton girls' doubles pair of Emma Jolly and Sarah Glassford placed fourth at GHAC, falling just short of qualifying. Mike Weber and Joanna Meltzer of GDHS were matched up against the top seed in their first game at GHAC and weren't able to advance to the provincials.

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