

# SPORTS & LEISURE

## Midget Hawks to compete in World Series

*Nucleus of 'motivated' team has been together for years and won't be intimidated*

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Staff Writer

A Georgetown-based girls' team will be the lone Canadian entry when the United States Fastpitch Association's World Series B under-18 tournament gets under way early next month in Panama City, Fla.

The Halton Hills Hawks are grouped with 20 U.S. teams in their division for the week-long event, which begins with five preliminary-round games before switching to a double-knockout loss format.

Although the Hawks are unbeaten and in first place in the Peel-Halton midget league (17-19 yrs.) with a 14-0-1 record, head coach Curtis Marcil of Georgetown said his squad is preparing to face its strongest competition yet in the Sunshine State. Five teams each from the fastpitch hotbed states of Tennessee and Missouri are in the draw, while Fayetteville, Ga. and Rayville, La. are also considered among the championship contenders.

"We've already played in tournaments this year against teams from Quebec, the east coast and the U.S. and held our own. These girls aren't going to be intimidated down there," said Marcil, who is in his ninth year in the Hawks' organization.

"I think they can go a long way if they play up to their potential and I wouldn't be surprised if we played all seven days of the tournament."

For fund-raising purposes, teams qualified for the 2007 USFA World Series last summer and the Hawks won a tourney in Mississauga in order to earn their trip to Florida. This season, they finished as runners-up at the St. Catharines Ladies' Invitational and won their preliminary pools in Brantford and the 2008 USFA World Series qualifier in Mississauga before being eliminated.

When asked to single out any standouts among the 11 players on the Halton Hills roster, manager Janet Hoskin said she couldn't, pointing to the squad's miniscule runs-against average so far in regular season and tournament play.

"The nucleus of the team has been together for the past three or four years and they've been successful all along. We did make a few new additions this year and they've really gelled together well with their defence and hitting, even better than we expected," Hoskin noted. "We also have four great pitchers and the remarkable part is that there are three bantam-aged girls who are only 16 and they're just as important as the other players on our team."

Four players— Jesse Haffner, Tori Marcil, Jen Davids and Nikki Sommerville— reside in Georgetown, while Shelby Davis and Ana Smelsky are from the Acton area. Sommerville won't be able to play, however, due to a broken collarbone and another player, Milton's Stacey Allison, had to leave for personal reasons, so the Hawks are permitted to select a yet-to-be-named replacement. Other Hawks on the team hail from Brampton, Guelph and Burlington.

This weekend, the Halton Hills midgets are in Kitchener for a tune-up tournament and have two Peel-Halton league games left before the drive to Florida next weekend.

Their opening game of the World Series will be on Tuesday, July 8 and for some of the players, a good performance could lead to scholarship opportunities south of the border as the event is heavily scouted by NCAA schools.

"All of the girls will be taking their profile cards with them. It's a great opportunity for them and it's just a great overall experience for the girls," Marcil added.

"One of our players, Kendyl Valenta of Brampton, has a hock-



The excitement has been building for months as the Halton Hills midget Hawks have been playing and practicing hard on the diamond to prepare for the USFA World Series championships in Panama City, Fla July 8-14. Team members (front, from left) are: Kendyl Valenta, Kristie Jackson-Haenel. Second row: Stacey Allison, Tori Marcil, Jamie Campbell, Shelby Davis, Jamie Allen, Ana Smelsky. Back row: Assistant coach Crystal Chimko, head coach Curtis Marcil, Jen Davids, Jen Riddell, Taylor Box, Jess Haffner. Absent from the photo were assistant coach Joe DeForest and Nikki Sommerville.

*Submitted photo*

ey scholarship to (the University of Connecticut) and she could just as easily get one for softball. And there are four or five of our players who should get consideration too."

Also on the Hawks' upcoming schedule is the qualifying tournament at the end of July for the Provincial Women's Softball Championships in Palmerston Aug. 10-12. Marcil said this year's lineup seems to be driven by a 1-0 loss in Mississauga last year in a game that would have

sent the Hawks on to the Eastern Canadian championships.

"For sure. That's why I'm certain this team is going to make the provincials this year," he said. "They're motivated already. I don't need to say much."

The midget Hawks are putting together a banner on which to display their sponsors for the remainder of the season and would appreciate any support to help cover the cost of the \$16,000 trip. Donations are being accepted at JV Clothing in

Georgetown Marketplace and at Sports Unlimited on Guelph St., as well as User's Rental on Willow St. in Acton.

### Jim Ford misnamed in Hall of Fame photo

In a photo of the Halton Hills Sports Museum inductees in the Wednesday, June 20 edition Jim Ford was incorrectly identified.

*The Independent & Free Press* regrets the error.

### Best on the beach

Seeded first in their favourite stop on the Ontario Volleyball Association's beach tour, Grade 11 Acton District High School students Ashley Nixon and Gabby Kosziwka went undefeated to take the gold medals in the Grades 11-12 high school bracket of a girls' pairs tournament at Victoria Beach in Cobourg last weekend. The 16-year-olds have been competing in the OVA's Tier I under-18 division in 2007 and have earned medals in all five events, picking up a gold, silver and three bronze medals. After losing the first set of the championship match in Cobourg 22-20 to a team from Toronto, Nixon and Kosziwka rallied to win 21-10 and 15-13 in the tiebreaker. They are gearing up for the OVA finals Aug. 5 and then the national championships Aug. 24-26, both held at Ashbridge's Bay in Toronto.

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