

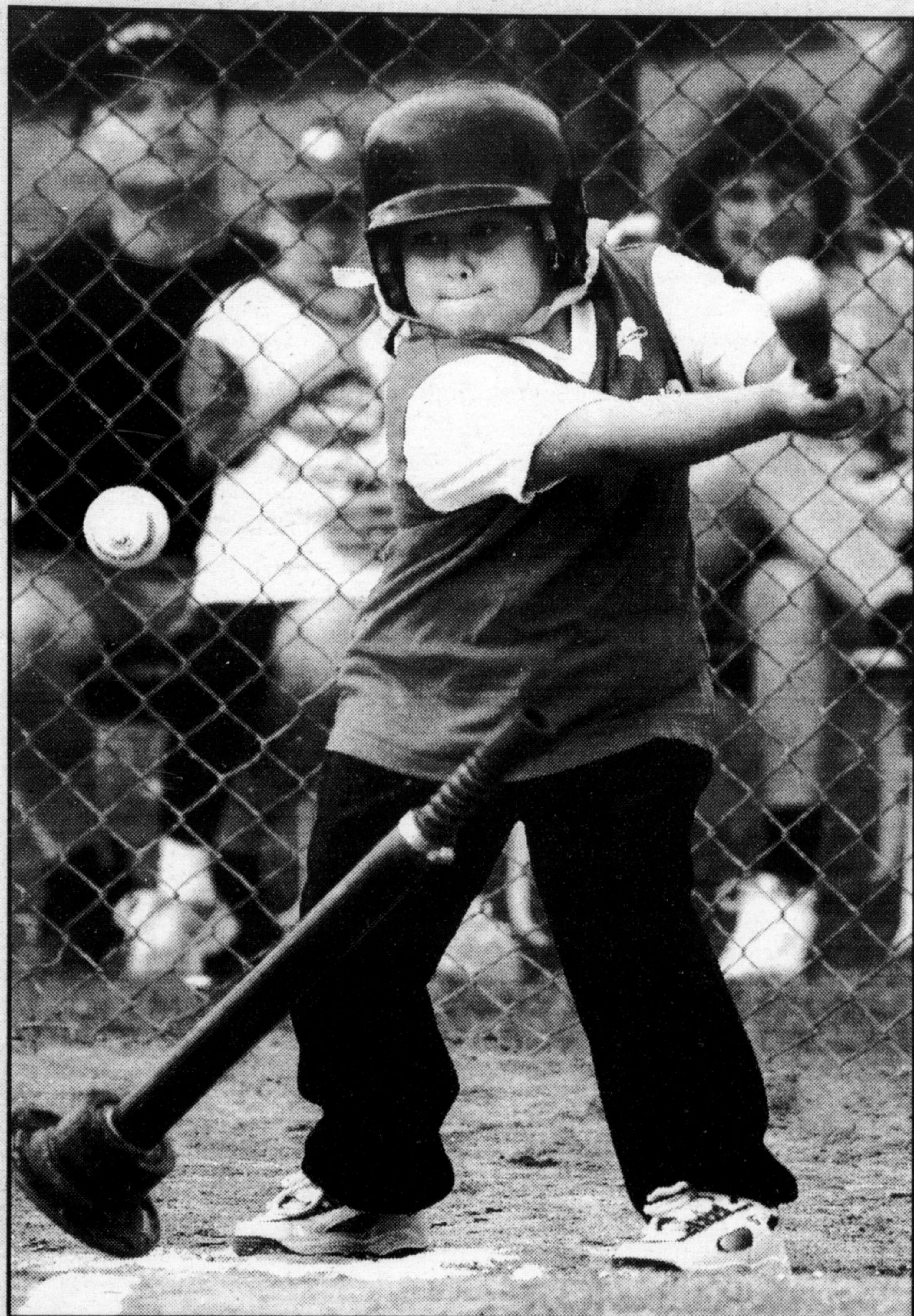


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THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 12, 2000



✓ Hit ... and run

Jamie McNeil (left) of Shoppers Drug Mart's senior t-ball team belts out a hit against Dufferin Aggregates during the Milton Girls Baseball Association Championship Day Saturday at Sam Sherratt. Meanwhile in junior t-ball action (at right), Kwik Copy's Kaisie Vandenheuvel heads for first base after a hit of her own against the Optimist Club, who eked out a 25-24 victory. In other junior t-ball play, Appliance Depot beat DalBello Industrial 25-21 while Dairy Queen nipped Appliance Depot 27-26. Zestna came out on top in the junior mosquito division while winning a tight three-way senior bantam race was Wallace Pontiac. Baily Heating and Cooling were crowned champions of the senior t-ball division and the rookie ball loop was won by Naylor Group.

Photos by GRAHAM PAINE



✓ West scoring champ joins Merchants

By STEVE LeBLANC
The Champion

The Merchants have only just begun to wheel and deal.

However, any additions made now aren't likely to top the one finalized by the local juniors Friday.

Milton's 2000/01 team took a sizable step toward offensive prosperity with the acquisition of Streetsville Derby Andy Rozak.

The West Conference scoring champ was a free agent — having been signed to a juvenile card last season — and felt it was time for a change.

"I had three great years there (Streetsville), but in my best interest it was just time to move on," remarked the 20-year-old Mississauga native, who topped the division with 96 total points — including 37 goals — last year.

While former Derby coach Mike Kalapaca now being an assistant in Milton made the move a little easier, Rozak said it wasn't much of a factor behind his decision to join the Merchants.

"In Milton, you've always got a chance to win," he said.

Merchants bench boss Glenn Walsh expects another big season out of his new star centre — stating that with his creativity and intelligence Rozak should be able to reach the 100-point plateau.

And with so many young forwards in the lineup this season, the former Derby's experience and leadership may be just as important as his scoring touch.

Joining Rozak in his Merchants debut Saturday in Georgetown was another league veteran who comes complete with a number of assets — not the least of which is size.

Ian LaBrash — a 6'3", 220 lbs. left winger from Blind River — was picked up from the Provincial Jr. A League's Port Hope Buzzers, who were recently sold to an American consortium. The 20-year-old's rights were sold off in a move toward a more youthful squad.

The power forward, who's a little rusty right now due to a lack

of ice time, collected 22 goals and 25 assists last year on a team that was — to say the least — offensively inept.

Nick Slawson, Milton's director of hockey operations, figures those solid numbers should only increase now that the big winger will have an opportunity to play with more gifted centremen like Rozak, veteran Elliot Altberg and promising newcomer Flavio Faggioni. "Ian will definitely be the guy creating traffic for us. He's tough to move in front," said Slawson.

These additions aside, Walsh still sees the team's overall youth and inexperience up front, particularly on the wings, as a concern — and that because of this the half-dozen veteran forwards will have to assume more responsibility than just scoring goals.

"I'm going to need all 12 guys out there focusing on defense and finishing their checks, no matter if they're a goal scorer or not," he stressed.

Walsh added that with so many new forwards, he and assistant coach Dan Sales will probably have a tougher time forming line combinations than previous Merchant coaches have. "It's been a bit of struggle so far. I'd say it's going to be pretty much trial and error the first 10 games," said Walsh.



Andy Rozak

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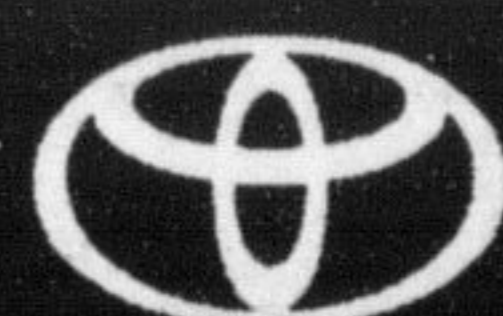
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