



SPORTS

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

FRIDAY APRIL 13, 2001

Jr. Red Sox manager optimistic about season

Rash of returning players provide solid nucleus for Milton's 2001 roster, Glenn Turner believes

By **MURRAY TOWNSEND**

Special to The Champion

Spring is all about optimism when it comes to baseball. That's because every team is tied for first place.

But the Milton Red Sox Junior team manager, Glenn Turner, has good reason to be hopeful about the upcoming season.

"We haven't lost anybody. That's a huge part of it. We're building on what we've begun to develop the last couple years. With the addition of four or five new guys along the way it should be nothing but upward."

The Red Sox are coming off a so-so inaugural season. They had a number of forfeits and a bucket load of rainouts, and still managed not to fall too far below the .500 mark.

The league meeting is set up for later this month, so Turner isn't quite sure what the setup will be. Indications are they will be playing in a two tiered system this year, in which Milton will face other centres with a population of between 30 thousand and 70 thousand that might also include second entries for large centres.

What he does know is that the team will play their home games on Sunday afternoons at 1 p.m. at Brian Best Park.

He also knows he's going to have a solid pitching staff. Back from last year are Andrew Coe, Matt Dickson, Mike Grabauskas, Steve Jay and Jarrett Konkle. Jeff McLeod is on a scholarship at an American college and is expected back in May. Adam Ahearn from Acton is currently at Brock University and wants to join the Milton organization.

Throw in Nate Perrott and Ian Moszczar — who comes from the Erin Mills organization — and according to Turner, "When you add up all of that it's pretty impressive."

Turner feels the catching position is strong with Mike Austen as the number one man and a number of others who can fill in there.

In the infield are David Lajeunesse, Taylor Lawton, Curt Mitchell, Andrew Neilson and Bud Hall.

Outfielders will include Todd Black, Jed Cosby, Paul Faggion, and Jordan Jeans. Coaches, besides Turner, are Mike Nevins, Frank Hume, and Larry Black, with Mike Cosby handling the administrative duties.

Turner looks at the roster and sees, for one thing, lots of players. That has its benefits, but can also make it difficult at times. His biggest challenge: "to keep the interest level peaked with this many competitive ballplayers at this age level. Which means it will be quite a juggling act to get everybody into the games and use them at their best potential."

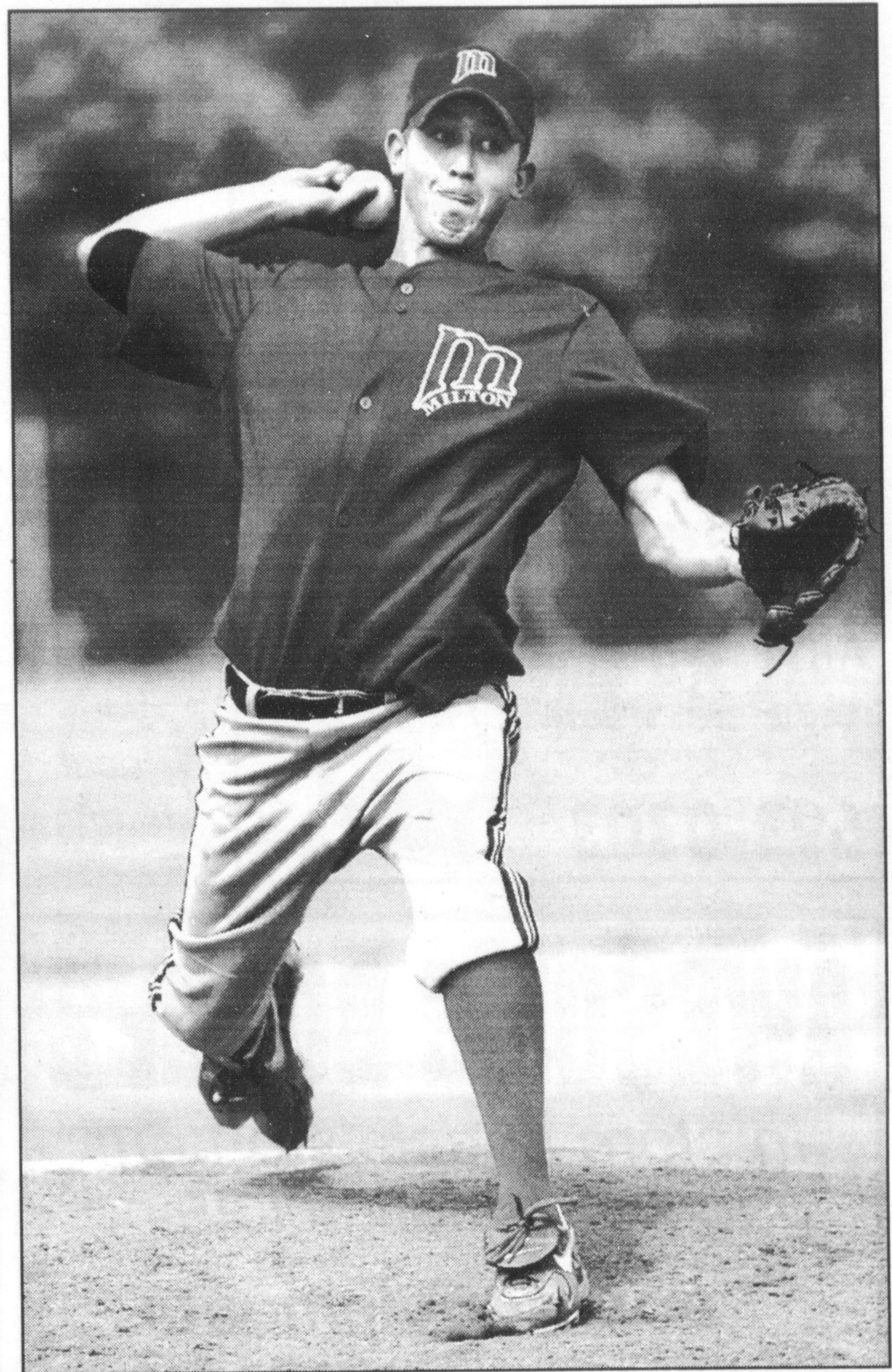
At that age, Turner notes, they run into a lot of work commitments, holidays, injuries, and family commitments, so they're going to need a lot of players.

"One thing I can tell you for sure is that every last one of these guys is really interested in doing well at playing this game. When they come to the park they're focused on playing the game."

"Before and after it's a different story," quipped Turner. "It's my job to keep them focused for the five hours they're at the park."

Speaking of at the park, Turner thinks more people should be there. "It should be entertaining. Hopefully we should open some eyes and get some folks out to watch these guys this year."

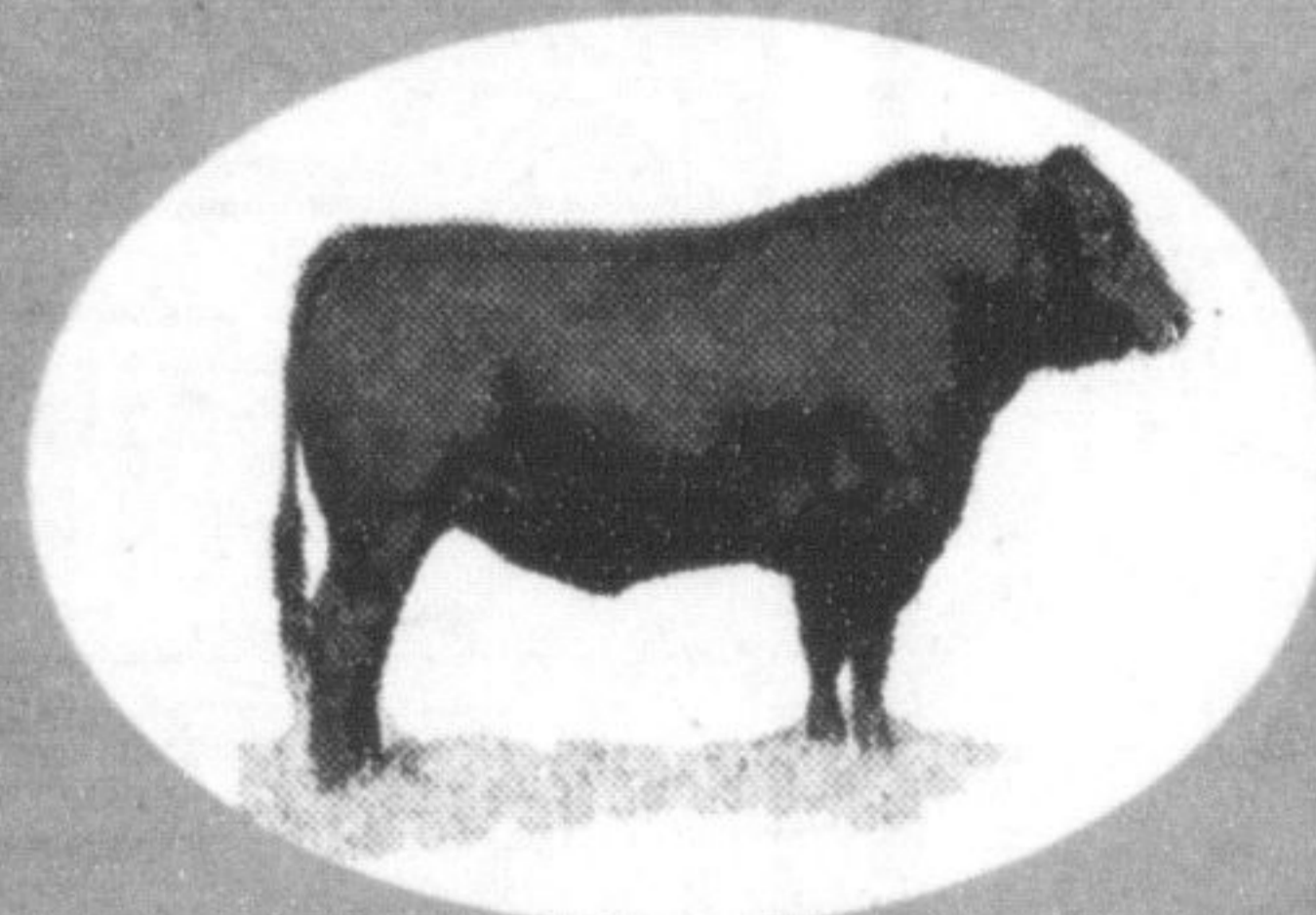
After all, they're currently tied for first place.



File photos by GRAHAM PAINE

Mike Grabauskas (above) and Mike Austen (behind the plate at left) are among many returning players who should make the Junior Red Sox more competitive this coming season.

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