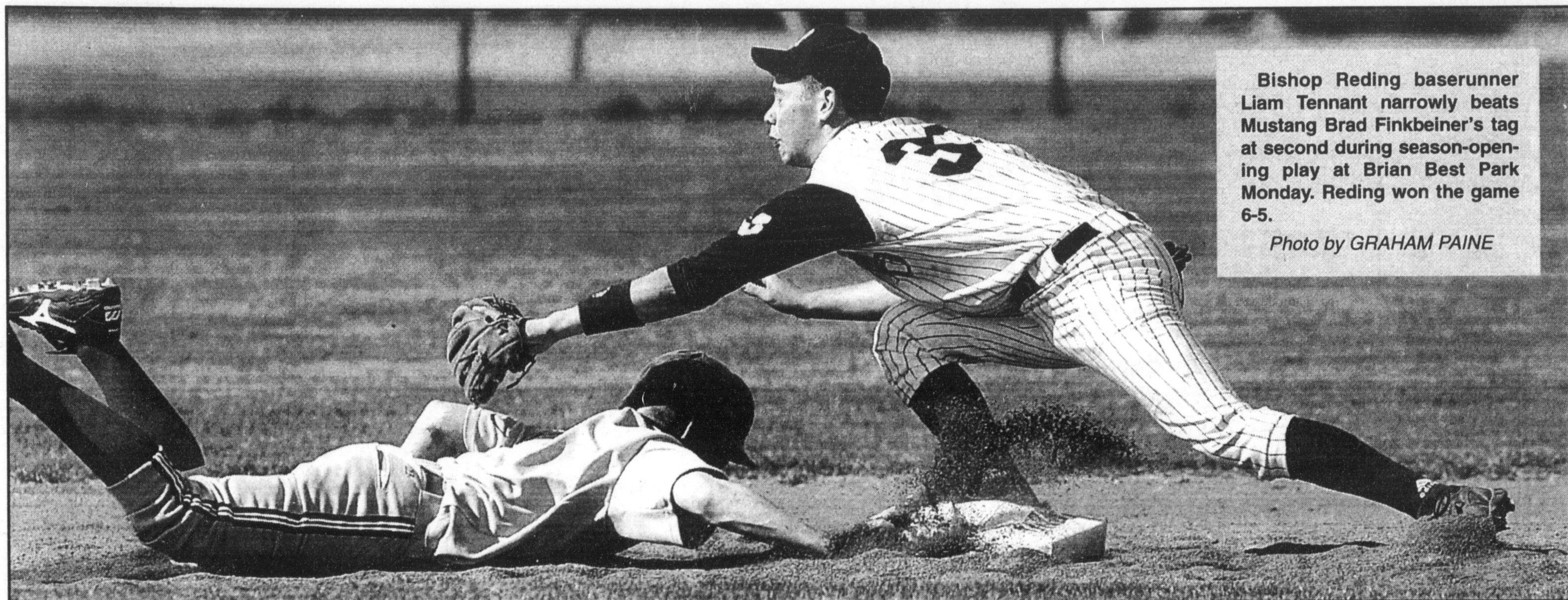




SPORTS

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

FRIDAY MAY 4, 2001



Bishop Reding baserunner Liam Tennant narrowly beats Mustang Brad Finkbeiner's tag at second during season-opening play at Brian Best Park Monday. Reding won the game 6-5.

Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Bishop Reding stages late rally to shade MD

By **STEVE LeBLANC**

The Champion

Nate Perrott made a rather memorable return to the Milton District Mustangs' baseball team at Brian Best Park Monday.

However, he'd just assume forget the way things ended Ñ and for that matter, so would his teammates.

Against cross-town rival Bishop Reding, MD's heavy hitter launched a monster two-run shot over the centre field fence to give his squad some insurance heading into the bottom of the seventh inning of season-opening play.

But ecstasy would quickly be followed by agony — at least where the Mustangs were concerned.

Ahead 5-2, Perrott's relief pitching performance took a drastic downward turn — as he coughed up the lead and allowed the winning run on his second balk of the afternoon.

Coming in to score from third base was Reding catcher Chris Dumencu. Jodie St. John, Reg Taylor and Liam Tennant also scored rally runs for BR.

While Perrott's short-lived heroics and lasting heartbreak was the main story of the day, a notable sidebar was the impressive effort of rookie Royal Julian Ricci.

The 11th grader delivered a nifty bit of relief pitching — giving up just a couple of hits, including the home run, over four innings — and served notice that he has the potential to be a reliable back-up for starter Conan O'Brien.

O'Brien wasn't too shabby either, allowing an unspectacular yet respectable half-dozen hits and three runs (one of them unearned) through the first three innings against his offensively talented opponents

The Mustangs jumped ahead early, staking themselves to a 1-0 advantage on three straight singles in the opening frame. They doubled that in their next at-bat before BR cut the lead in half in the bottom of the second.

The teams exchanged runs in the third inning as well and that's

the way it would stay until the exciting finale.

Dumencu and Andrew Pepper each had two RBI for Reding, while driving in runs for MD were Perrott with two plus Brad Finkbeiner and John Melito with one apiece.

Dumencu threw out runners at first and second while Pepper and fellow Royal Dan Digironimo made a couple of standout plays at shortstop and third base respectively.

MD had three of the four ex-tra-base hits on the afternoon and overall out-hit Reding 8-5.

Spartans start year on winning note

E.C. Drury's baseball team has wasted no time in shaking the memory of last year's lacklustre showing.

The Spartans took both contests this past week and have already matched their win total from 2000.

In Oakville Monday, E.C. scored early and often to mercy the T.A. Blakelock Tigers 14-0. The hosts quit in the top of the fifth inning.

Pitcher Jon Gleed earned the win with a six-strikeout, one-hit performance through four frames. His teammates offered full support in the field, delivering an errorless afternoon.

Offensively, Drury was led by Chris Holmes — who went a

perfect 4-for-4 at the plate — driving in a couple of runs and scoring three times himself. Jordan Jeans stood out as well with three hits — including a pair of doubles — and three RBI.

Two days later at Brian Best Park, Drury edged Oakville's St. Thomas Aquinas Raiders 4-3.

Kevin Sales scored the winning run in the bottom of the sixth while Jeans smacked a two-run homer in the opening frame. Mark Black also drove in a run. Reliever James MacDonald worked three shutout innings to pick up the victory.

The Spartans host cross-town rival Bishop Reding Monday. Game time is 3:30 p.m.

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