

Please fax your team reports and sports story ideas to Steve LeBlanc at (905) 878-4943, or drop them off anytime at The Champion, 191 Main St. E.

# Red Sox and Metros offer endless excitement during marathon clash

W.P. Kinsella would have loved it. In what would have provided sufficient material for a sequel to his masterpiece The Iowa Baseball Confederacy — a lesser known follow-up to Shoeless Joe that centres around a seemingly imaginary minor league and an endless game between its all-stars and the 1908 Chicago Cubs — Milton's Senior Red Sox and their St. Catharines counterparts staged a modern-day version of the eternal showdown.

In front of a small but appreciative crowd at Brian Best Park Saturday afternoon, the hosts finally fell 1-0 in the 17th inning — just shy of four-and-a-half hours after the first-round playoff clash began.

It stands second only to a 1998 Milton Merchant-Rayside Balfour Sabrecat triple overtime tilt — eventually won by Milton 5-4 — as the longest game played on local soil in recent memory.

And while there was no championship trophy at stake and fan support amounted to only a few dozen loved ones and true baseball enthusiasts, it was a monumental event all the same and worthy of rave reviews.

Perhaps the best indication of just how long the game was centered around Nate Perrott. The junior affiliate slugger — and recent standout during provincial championship play with the younger Sox — came in as a pinch hitter in the 11th inning and still had time to get four at-bats. The third of these was met with the first wooden bat hit of his career, a sharp single that destroyed his stick.

But that was just the tip of the iceberg in terms of notable side stories on the day for the hometown Sox.



with STEVE LeBLANC

Up Front

The most impressive was without question the ironman performance of starting pitcher Brent Kostal — who worked a dozen scoreless frames to outlast St. Catharines' Brian Essery and come about as close to beating sheer fatigue as is humanly possible.

"Yeah, we usually stop him at about 200," quipped teammate Dan Fiorita, referring to Kostal's pitch count somewhere around the 11th. His 12-inning campaign was one frame better than his longest effort, delivered four years ago as a juvenile-age hurler.

Then there was Milton's defense — exceptional from the start and downright masterful at times, especially shortstop Josh Campbell's 16th inning throw-out at home that capped a double play and kept the game alive.

Catcher Ryan Davison impressively gunned down two runners — and deserved a medal for all the abuse his knees took over four-plus hours — while second baseman Kurt Mitchell and centre fielder Nick Aalbers were poster boys for consistent fielding, each making a dozen outs.

And few 17-inning games (not that there are many) come without at least a little

controversy. Saturday's Milton-St. Catharines showdown had its share — with a questionable interference call against Davison in the seventh and a shallow right-field hit by Mitchell in the 10th that appeared to be caught by just about everyone but the umpire.

Even Nathan Tami's four innings of relief was quite respectable — although his efforts weren't nearly as memorable as they would have been on another day when the defense and starting pitcher were less than spectacular.

And when it comes to sheer excitement, few local ball games — if any — measure up to this one. Milton had a runner on third base in the seventh, ninth and 13th while Campbell's 16th inning throw-out at home narrowly quashed the visitors' best chance of scoring to that point.

The game finally ended when the Red Sox failed to erase St. Catharines' 1-0 lead, established with a Rocco Spano RBI double. But by then, the score was almost secondary.

Sure winning is always sweeter than the alternative, but just being part of an epic encounter like this — no matter what side you wind up on — has to be fulfilling. And like principle character Gideon Clarke in W.P. Kinsella's often under-appreciated classic, I was darn grateful to be there for the show.

Also like The Iowa Baseball Confederacy, Saturday's game is sure to be questioned by skeptics in coming years. I mean 17 innings with just one run scored seems unbelievable, right?

Well it happened — this is no work of fiction.

## Master Baik's Tae Kwon Do Academy

The Best Total Martial Arts • Winning Your Life

Men • Women  
Children • Family Classes

Back to School  
Special  
40% OFF  
First 30 persons



Ask  
About Our  
Free Trial  
Lesson

- Tae Kwon Do
- Taek Gyeon
- ◆ Benefits
- Self Discipline Over Mind & Body
- Physical Fitness
- Self Defense
- Reduces Stress
- Professional Instructor

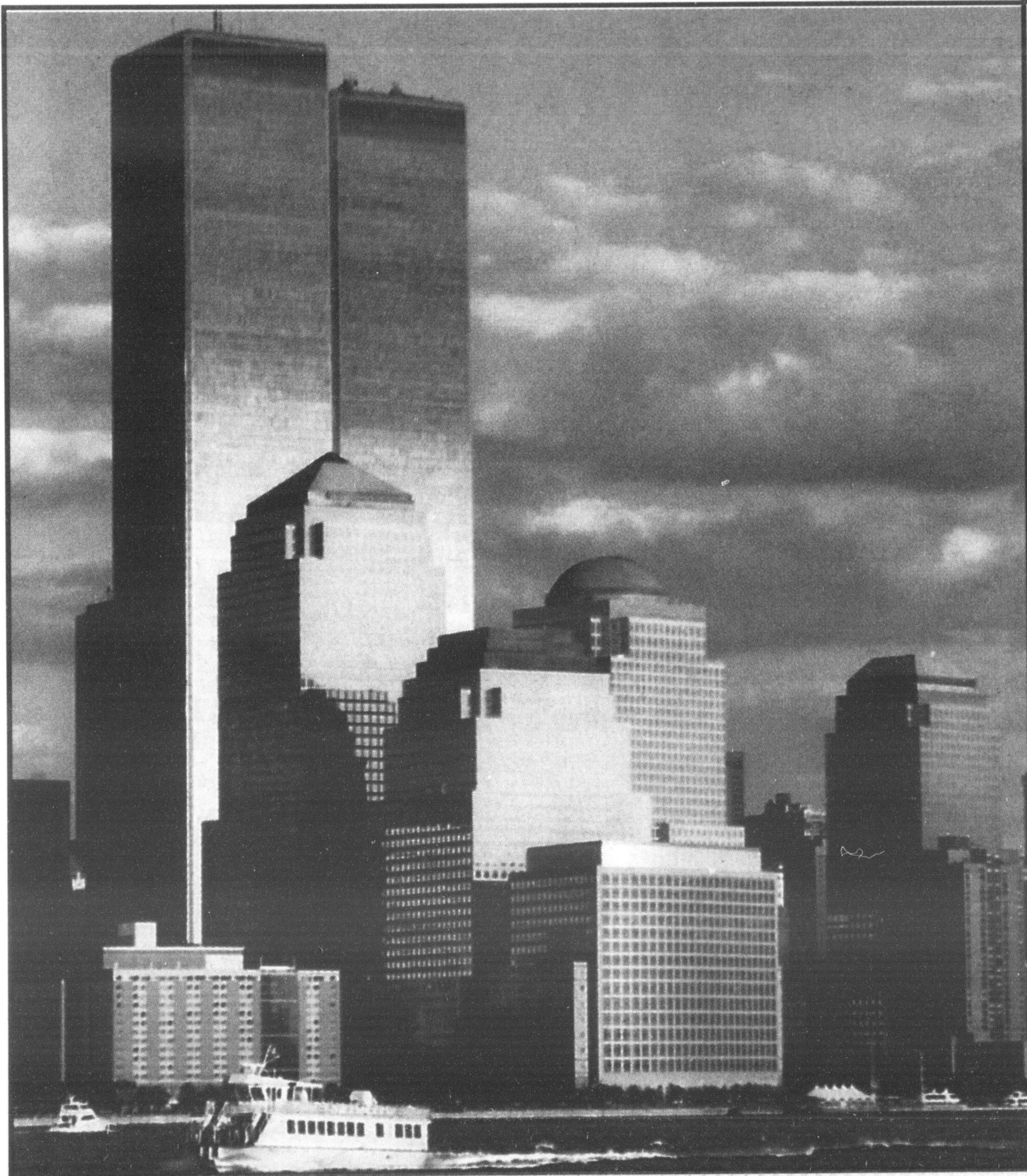
• SAFETY • EXCITEMENT

Open 6 Days a Week

905-878-9943

416-564-7410 Cell

781 Main St. E. #24, Milton  
(Across from GO Station)



# 9/11

## Not Forgotten...

As we observe the first anniversary of the attacks on New York & Washington we would like to hear how this event affected you.

Send us your thoughts, comments or observations & they will appear in our Local Heroes Feature, Tuesday, Sept. 10th.

Please include your name, along with your comments.

**Deadline for submissions is Wednesday, Sept. 4th.**

You can fax us at 905-876-2341, e-mail [champion@haltonsearch.com](mailto:champion@haltonsearch.com) or drop off at our office 191 Main St. E. Milton

The  
**Canadian Champion**