



SPORTS

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

FRIDAY AUGUST 1, 2003

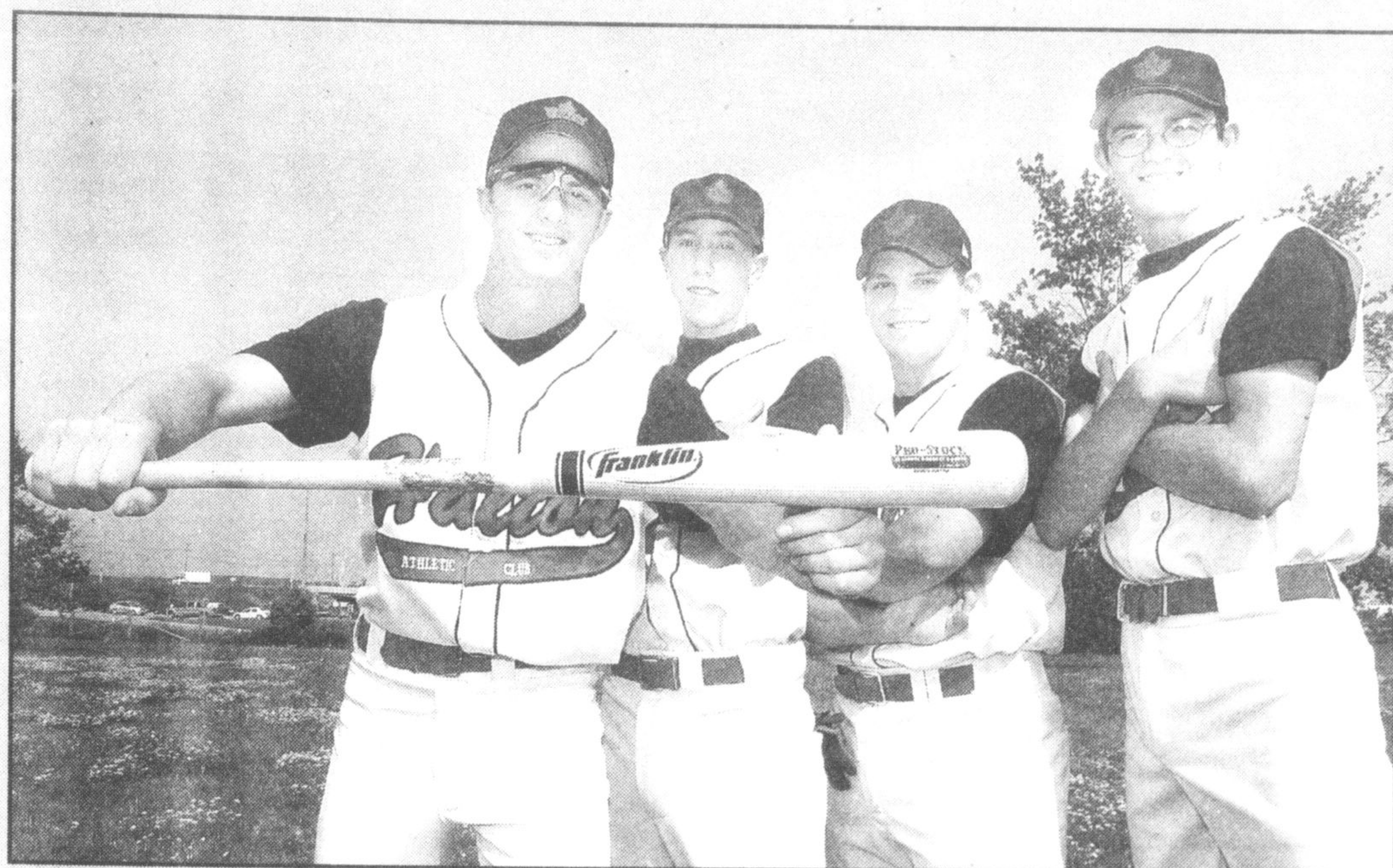


Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Milton-area players (from left) Steve Spiers, Josh Wagemann, Nick Mazzorato and Shawn Shadlock are part of the Halton Athletic Club Under-19 ball club that won its own tournament last weekend.

HAC reigns supreme locally

By STEVE LeBLANC

The Champion

Revenge in sports is always sweet — but particularly so when it's accompanied by a championship victory in front of the hometown crowd.

With that in mind, Halton Athletic Club Under-19 baseball players are no doubt still savouring last weekend's Gates-America Freight Wood Bat Classic title triumph.

On the friendly confines of Maplehurst Ball Park Sunday afternoon, the tournament hosts — four of whom are Miltonians — struck gold by outlasting the Canadian Thunderbird 18s 6-4.

The narrow win served as pay-back for a round-three loss the previous day, as well as a championship defeat this past spring in Vaughan.

"It was great to turn the tables on them," said HAC head coach Steve Mousseau, whose assistants include local bullpen instructor Jeff MacLeod. "We really ran against them. We must have had six or seven stolen bases in the finals."

Registering two of those thefts was local right fielder Steve Spiers, who chipped in with a walk, hit and run. The Thunderbirds threatened to rally in their last at-bat before Oakville's Matt Wood made

a dynamite catch in left field to crush those comeback hopes. Remarked Mousseau, "That essentially took the wind out of their sails."

While Spiers was the biggest contributor among the locals, fellow Miltonians Shawn Shadlock and Josh Wagemann offered solid spot-duty performances as well.

Shadlock — who at just 16 years of age is the team's second youngest player — delivered some credible mound work in a low-scoring loss to Richmond Hill Saturday afternoon, and according to his skipper is among the team's most promising youngsters. "Right now he's just a kid and not seeing that much play, but Shawn's going to be a dynamite ball player," stressed Mousseau.

Rounding out HAC's Milton foursome is Nick Mazzorato, who was sidelined with a banged up shoulder last weekend.

His teammates kicked off the tournament with a 2-1 nail-biter over the Toronto Hawks, and following straight defeats squeaked by the Canadian Thunderbird 17s 5-4 Sunday morning to reach the championship finals.

Steve LeBlanc can be reached at sleblanc@haltonsearch.com.

IceHawks owner eyeing Argonauts

Forgione interested in buying CFL club

By STEVE LeBLANC

The Champion

Mario Forgione is back at it again.

Just a few short months after buying the OHL Mississauga IceDogs, the Oakville native and Mississauga auto parts manufacturing magnate — who also owns the Tier 2 Jr. A Milton IceHawks (formerly the Merchants) — has begun a bid to break into the Canadian Football League.

He's admitted to being among those interested in taking over the financially-challenged Toronto Argonauts, whose owner Sherwood Schwarz was removed from power by league commissioner Tom Wright Tuesday.

While Forgione was rumoured to be a potential buyer as early as last week, he only confirmed his intentions yesterday morning.

"I'm an interested party, and that's all I can say at this point," said the IceHawks/IceDogs owner, who up until yesterday hadn't spoken directly with any other media about the issue.

Forgione — who's gradually building a sports/entertainment empire and has hopes of adding to his hockey club collection with semi-pro purchase — had expected to meet with CFL officials this past week.

Although that plan was nixed with Schwarz' removal, overall wishes to buy into the cash-strapped 130-year-old football franchise remain intact.

Said Forgione, "There's still a level of interest there, the model may just have to change. Right now we're stepping back and revisiting the plan."

The Depco International Inc. president is among a consortium of individuals looking to buy the Argos — not unlike the situation with the IceDogs, which he purchased with St. Louis Blues defenceman Chris Pronger.

Forgione stressed yesterday that his CFL endeavours — successful or not — wouldn't affect his involvement with the IceHawks. He added, "I'm a long-term investor. We have no vision to divesting ourselves from any property within our sports/entertainment company."

While some might question the logic of buying the Argos — or for that matter investing in the financially-vulnerable CFL at all — Forgione points to the nearby Montreal Alouettes as an example of the league's potential for both monetary and on-field success.

"These type of opportunities don't come along for successful franchises," he noted. "With the right business plan, this team (Toronto) could work."

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Mavs win zone title

The championship beat goes on.

Milton's bantam lacrosse team added to this season's hefty hardware haul at John Tonelli Sports Centre Monday night — toppling Arthur 8-3 to capture the OLA Zone 8 title.

The Mavericks missed their opportunity to sweep Arthur last Wednesday — losing 7-6 in overtime — but took no chances in game four Monday. They jumped ahead early and put things out of reach with a four-goal second period.

Mike Currie and Kevin Winter each tallied twice, while singles were chipped in by Richard Bayley, Joey De'Athe, Ian Goertz and Jeff Lynch.

The Mavericks will look to secure one final trophy this weekend at the Ontario 'C' championships in St. Catharines.

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