



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Sherylene Leslie proudly displays the silver medal she earned with Clarkson's intermediate softball team.

Seasoned softball player bound for nationals

By STEVE LeBLANC
The Champion

Sherylene Leslie has finally secured a high-stakes softball medal, and already has thoughts of upgrading it.

After back-to-back fourth-place finishes at provincials with her hometown Milton Mystics, the 24-year-old third baseman and her expansion Clarkson Scarlett's Intermediate 1 squad took silver recently in Byron.

The second-place showing earned them a berth to the Eastern Canadian Championships in P.E.I. September 9 and 11 — where Leslie is hoping to cap the season with another piece of hardware.

"I'd say we've got a good shot at medaling," she suggested.

And there's plenty of evidence to support that claim.

While Clarkson was thumped 12-0 in Ontario's gold medal game by the defending provincial and Eastern Canadian champion Hamilton Pontiacs, the two teams split their regular season series — while Clarkson lost only 1-0 to the powerhouse steel-town squad in the finals of an early-season tournament.

Explained Leslie, "That 12-0 game didn't really indicate how evenly

matched we are with the Pontiacs. We'd already qualified for the Eastern Canadians and we would have had to beat Hamilton twice since it was a double knockout. And by that point we were kind of tired.

"I think we have a good chance of beating anybody out there. We're a new team, but we're pretty well-rounded with no real weak spots."

She and the Scarlets staved off elimination three straight times at the provincials to book passage to P.E.I. — solidifying their advancement with a 5-1 pay-back victory over Clarkson.

Leslie provided rock-solid fielding in this pivotal showdown and drove in a run with a sacrifice bunt.

Overall, she made a number of key outs throughout the tournament, including factoring into a crucial double play in round one to help edge Milverton 3-2.

"I guess I'm known more for my defense," she said.

After losing to Port Colborne 4-3 in the second round, Clarkson rebounded with 3-0 and 1-0 decisions over Stratford and Chepstow — last year's silver and bronze-medal finishers respectively.

'Hawks sweep exhibition series with Georgetown

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One could argue that IceHawk fans would be well-advised not to put too much stock into this past weekend's home-and-home sweep of the neighbouring Georgetown Raiders.

After all, it's still just pre-season and the defending Dudley-Hewitt Cup champs don't even have a number one goalie yet.

But given the fact that they've taken the conference title two of the last three seasons and eliminated Milton from the playoffs the last three years, back-to-back wins over the Raiders — even in exhibition play — should be looked upon with at least cautious optimism.

"It gets you over that mental hurdle, just the fact that you did it — whether it's with half the lineup you'll start the year with or not," said head coach/general manager George Dupont, who like his weekend opponents was missing several veterans.

Added third-year defenceman Jeff Caister, "It's always good when you beat these guys (Raiders). The players may change but the rivalry's still there. This gets us going in the right direction. It's encouraging."

Showing signs that they may have a little more offensive depth this season, the IceHawks followed up on Friday's 4-4 tie in Mississauga with 4-1 and 6-3 decisions over Georgetown.

Punctuating a busy weekend with surprising spark Sunday afternoon at Memorial Arena, they jumped

ahead with three first-period goals — two by Jr. B St. Mary's Lincoln acquisition Matt Read — and were fundamentally sound the rest of the way.

"We should be three or four lines strong this season, and that's what it takes to win a championship," suggested Caister.

Picked up from the Newmarket Hurricanes, Dan Falbo tallied twice to lead Saturday's attack at Alcott Arena, where number one goalie Zach Kleiman turned back 25 of 26 shots in his first start between the pipes.

"He's a big guy who covers a lot of net and has good rebound control," said Dupont of his 6'3", 210 lbs. cager, a

Saskatoon native who put up credible numbers last year with the mid-pack Gloucester Rangers of the Central Jr. A league. "I don't see us giving up a lot of good second and third opportunities because of him."

However, Milton's bench boss isn't quite content with what he sees on the defensive side of things.

"We need to solidify the blueline — get some more experience back there," he noted.

Back for a third season with Georgetown, Campbellville's Rob Sgarbossa was recently named an alternate captain and drew an assist against his hometown club Saturday.

The IceHawks wrap up their exhibition schedule at home against the Mississauga Chargers Friday and kick off the regular season September 9 versus the Brampton Capitals, also at Memorial. Both games begin at 7:30 p.m.



Filly engineers amazing come-from-behind win at Mohawk

Cabrini Hanover joined the ranks of the finest three-year-old pacing fillies in history with an absolutely unbelievable performance in the \$680,100 Fan Hanover Stakes Saturday night at Mohawk.

Sent postward as the 7-5 favourite, Cabrini Hanover and driver Brian Sears had to overcome a shocking break at start that shuffled last year's Canadian juvenile champion filly back to ninth — leaving a seemingly impossible task ahead of her.

Rising to the occasion, she moved from eighth over a 'good track' — slowed slightly by afternoon showers — turning for home and kicked into high gear. Cabrini Hanover sailed up the middle, wearing down her rivals with ever stride, and reached the wire one-and-a-half lengths ahead of Bound For Glory in 1:52.1. Lady Dillinger also rallied remarkably from 10th spot to finish third, just a head out of second.

Chotat Milk, who had edged Cabrini Hanover in the Mistletoe Shalee August 6 at the Meadowlands, had been hustled to



with BRUCE MURRAY

the front by Milton's Luc Ouellette and took the field to the quarter in :27.4. Western Cruise then came calling before the half, before both early front-runners were passed by Modern Medicine going into the far turn.

Meanwhile, Jimmy Takter-trained Cabrini Hanover was languishing in eighth, more than seven lengths back, with a ton of ground to make up in the final fraction. But make it up she did, in an effort that had veteran race trackers in awe as she became racing's newest millionaire in the process.

Sears tipped her out wide turning for home and the rest was history.

"She was real aggressive with me at the start," said Sears, who's enjoying a banner season as the continent's leading money-winning driver. "I knew I couldn't

keep her off the gate at that point. So I tried to just steady her but she just got 'rammy' with me and went to running. Originally I thought (after the break) I'd try for a decent cheque, but halfway around the turn I thought this isn't the worst spot to be. She felt like she had plenty of pace."

Added Takter, "I needed this win. We've had a good year, but in big races things haven't been going well. I thought, here goes another one. This is a phenomenal animal. She's just unique."

Last year, Cabrini Hanover — co-owned by Bob Anderson of St. Thomas and King City's David Willmot — set a world record of 1:51 at Woodbine on her way to winning five of seven starts and taking O'Brien and Woodbine Entertainment Group honours as Canada's top two-year-old pacing filly.

This year, the daughter of Western Ideal-Cathedra, who was a \$350,000 yearling purchase, had prevailed in four of her eight starts before Saturday's memorable showing.

Milton foursome settles for fifth

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"It was really our experience that got us through, the fact that we'd been there before and knew what it took to win," said the local vice. "But we certainly did it the hard way."

The national champs actually lost their first game to a Milton Lawn Bowling Club team — comprised of out-of-towners Mark Sanford, Jeff Harding, Martin Foxhall and Martin Haalstra — 15-11.

But the local foursome — who won the provincials in June — had to settle for fifth overall, due primarily to 18-12 and 28-17 losses at the hands of Manitoba

and Saskatchewan.

The Ontario teams weren't separated by much in preliminary play, with 4-2-1 and 4-3 records illustrating just how close this year's championship was.

"There was definitely a lot of parity this year," said Anderson. "Usually two teams run away from the pack, but that wasn't the case at all this time."

This marked the third time in seven years that a fours team with local connections medaled at the nationals. In 1999, a Milton-based contingent including Ken Armstrong — playing second — captured bronze in Toronto.