

Softballer's trip to P.E.I. golden

Leslie helps expansion Clarkson triumph at Eastern Canadians

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
The Champion

Payback is never as sweet as when it's delivered in championship play.

Sherylene Leslie can certainly attest to that, after her expansion Clarkson Scarletts Intermediate 1 softball squad topped the four-time defending champion Hamilton Pontiacs 5-1 in the Eastern Canadian finals earlier this month in P.E.I.

Hamilton had thumped Clarkson 12-0 for Ontario gold last month in Byron and headed into the season-ending tournament with what should have been a thoroughly-intimidating track record.

But Leslie's Scarletts refused to let the Pontiacs' past successes dictate the future.

Explained the 24-year-old Miltonian, "We'd split our regular-season series with them and the only reason they beat us by so much at the provincials was that we'd already qualified (for the Eastern Canadians) and were kind of tired. We knew Hamilton was beat-able."

That belief would come to fruition, as Clarkson jumped ahead with a first-inning run and gradually tightened the noose on their heavily-favoured provincial adversaries — who didn't score until the fourth frame and were limited to just a couple of hits when 2005 stakes were at their highest.

"They thought they'd just walk all over us, but we played our hearts out and left them shocked and devastated," Leslie said. "It was just awesome."

Platooning at third base in P.E.I., Leslie was on the bench for the gold-medal clash. However, she made a major contribution to Clarkson getting to the finals — driving in the eventual winning run and snagging a huge liner for the second last out to help beat Nova Scotia's She-Devils 6-3 in the semis.

"I'm known more for my defense," noted the seasoned softballer, who came up with two other throw outs against the She-Devils and fared well defensively throughout the weekend showcase.

Leslie's Scarletts gave up just six runs in as many games out east and turned back challenges from New Brunswick, P.E.I., Quebec and Nova Scotia opponents en route to final four play — with their stiffest test coming in a 1-0 whitewash of the host Yogis in round two.

"Our whole game just came together. Everybody picked it up and got it done," said Leslie.

Clarkson's Eastern Canadian triumph was especially sweet for its Milton infielder, who'd narrowly missed securing a provincial medal in back-to-back attempts with her hometown Milton Mystics.



Sherylene Leslie



Photo by BARRIE ERSKINE

Boost for Games

Hudson's Bay Company president and CEO George Heller (third from left) hands over a cheque for \$375,000 to Claude Bennett, president of the Commonwealth Games, while Commonwealth Games athletes look on during a special presentation at Wednesday's HBC Golf Tournament at Rattlesnake Point Golf Club.

Mr. Muscleman earns surprisingly easy triumph in Maple Leaf Trot

Mr. Muscleman flexed his way to a rather convincing Maple Leaf Trot victory at Mohawk Saturday night — handily taking the \$918,500 race, which offered surprisingly little competition but plenty of confusion.

A much-anticipated battle of the sexes between Mr. Muscleman and Peaceful Way never materialized — as the filly queen broke stride shortly after the opening quarter and never recovered.

This allowed the defending champ to break away from the field down the stretch and secure a comfortable five-and-a-half length triumph in 1:52.1, a full second slower than his track-record performance in the Breeders Crown two weeks earlier.

Muscles Marinara took third, while rounding out the top three was Mystical

Sunshine.

With Saturday's win, Mr. Muscleman becomes the eighth horse in history to claim back-to-back Maple Leaf Trots — and the first since No Sex Please did so in 1989 and 1990.

The 54th running of the summer-ending classic certainly wasn't without controversy, as the recall lights unexpectedly went on to signal a false start while the horses were lining up behind the starting gate.

This led to more than a little uncertainty among some of the drivers, and after the contest, the Ontario Racing Commission judges interviewed all 11 reinsmen and subsequently ordered all bets waged on four horses — Peaceful Way, Hellava Hush, JM Vangogh and Hez Striking — refunded.

Mr. Muscleman driver Ron Pierce said he wasn't bothered by the pre-race confusion.

"He's been so good for so long," he said. "I was just going to wait and see what everyone else was doing and make up my mind. As it turned out, we just floated out of there, let everybody settle in. Turning for home, I just waved the whip at him a little bit and he did the rest."

Mr. Muscleman took over from Abbey Road C after the opening quarter was reached in :27.4. While pressed by Elegant Man at the half — hit in 56 seconds flat — Mr. Muscleman continued to motor, repelling all challengers in a tour-de-force performance that put another impressive stamp on his impeccable resumé.

It was a completely different story for Peaceful Way, who headed into Saturday's race undefeated in seven starts this year and was expected to show just why she's the continent's best female trotter.

With the victory — his 12th in 14 outings this season — Mr. Muscleman boosted his career bankroll to \$3.7 million for Adam Victor Jr. and Son Stable of New York and strengthened his bid for Horse of the Year honours.

Not too shabby considering he cost a measly \$2,000 as a yearling.

"Yeah, he was just awesome tonight," said co-owner Adam Victor Jr. "All week long, (trainer) Mike Vanderkemp and (caretaker) P.J. Fraley told us that he was better this week than what he was before the Breeders Crown and he showed it tonight. Oh, he's a freak. Just from when he was two and a big, lanky trotter that would just trot, to now he's grown and is just a freak."

The Maple Leaf Trot also represented the richest field ever assembled for a harness race in Canada, with the 11 starters boasting combined lifetime earnings of more than \$12 million.

Reid named an assistant captain with 67s

Local blueliner eagerly awaits third year with Ottawa

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
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Elgin Reid will look to bring his 'A' game this season, to match the 'A' now emblazoned on his jersey.

The 18-year-old Miltonian was recently named an assistant captain with the Ottawa 67s, something he's certainly not taking lightly — especially considering the legendary coach who gave it to him.

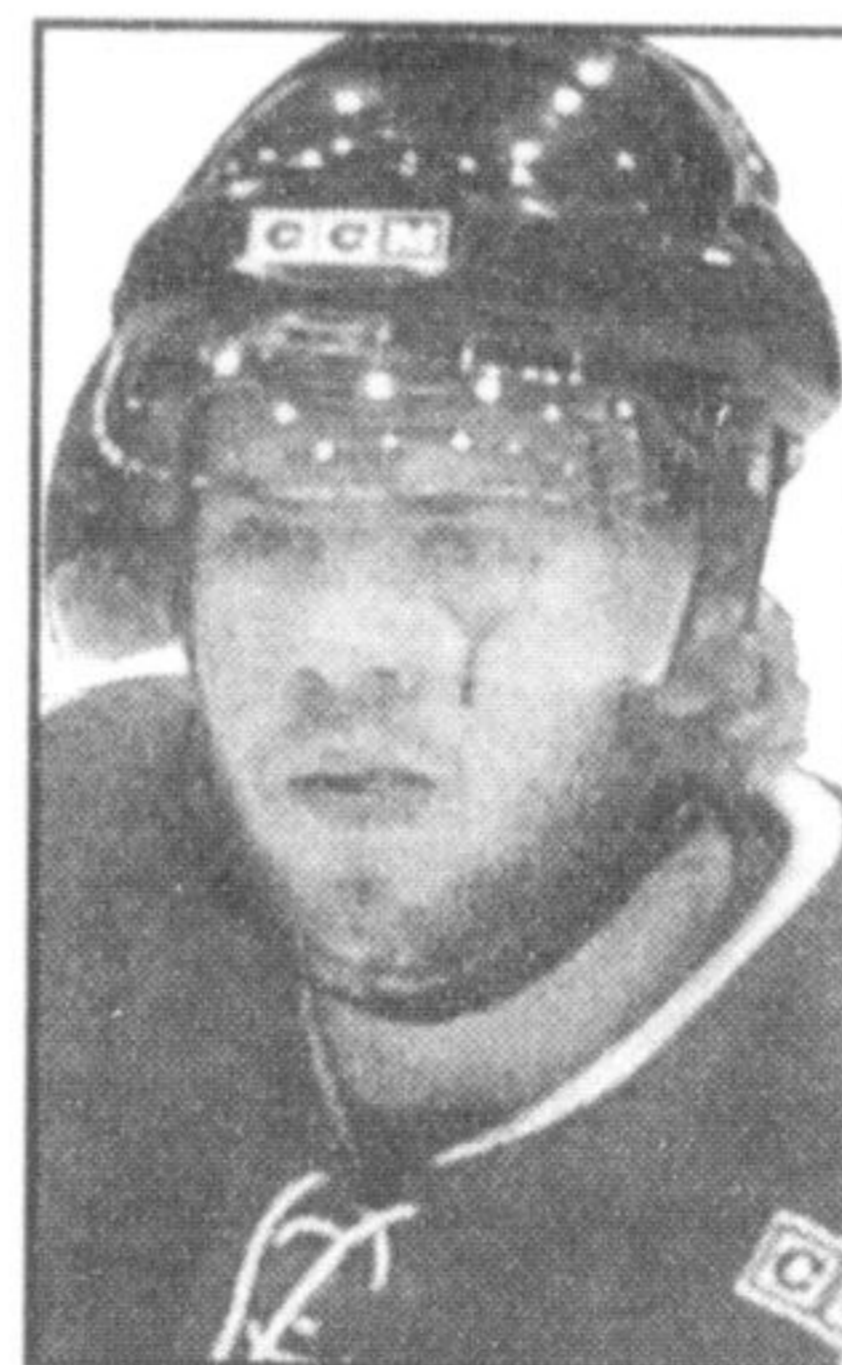
"When Brian Kilrea believes in you like that it's something," said the third-year defenceman, who's battled the injury bug throughout his OHL career. "I'm really pleased, but at the same time it comes

with responsibility that I've got to take pretty seriously."

Reid's experience and leadership will be needed in ample supply to help stabilize a lineup that's minus a lot of veteran forwards from last year's Cinderella team, which captured the Eastern Conference championship and subsequently reached the Memorial Cup.

"I don't think we can put pressure on ourselves to do that again," suggested Reid, who had 14 regular-season points last year and another four in the playoffs. "We've just got to go one game at a time and not look too far ahead."

While quite young up front, the 67s look fairly



Elgin Reid

solid in their own end — with most of their blueline unit returning and stand-out goalie Danny Batochoio now back from Chicago Blackhawks camp.

Also in Ottawa's favour is an unbeaten pre-season campaign that was wrapped up with Sunday afternoon's 5-3 decision over visiting Kingston.

The 67s' exhibition run included two-game sweeps of Kingston, Belleville and QMJHL expansion St. John's, Newfoundland.

"That confidence will be key, particularly for the young guys," Reid stressed. "It's a big boost when you have to start the season on the road."

The 67s kicks off 2005/06 play in Sault Ste. Marie Friday and then head to Sudbury for a Sunday afternoon game. Their home opener is slated for September 30 against Toronto's St. Michael's Majors.

Volleyball club holding tryouts

The Milton Storm girls volleyball club will be holding tryouts for its 2005/06 this month at Chris Hadfield Public School.

Tryouts run Tuesdays from 8 to 10 p.m. and Thursdays from 6 to 10 p.m., with players 11 to 17 years of age welcome to come out, regardless of

past volleyball experience.

Players will be divided into four different age groups and compete at tournaments throughout the season.

For more information, call Raymond Fox at (905) 878-2513.