

SPORTS

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New team a big hit with Teague

Local softball player and Higgins crew excel at the 'Pif'

By Steve LeBlanc
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Neil Teague didn't need long to decide to jump on board with a new team this season. And it didn't take long for that decision to pay huge dividends for the accomplished local softball player.

The first recruit of the recently-established Higgins squad, 39-year-old Teague enjoyed his best-ever team finish at the prestigious Yvon 'Pif' Depatie Invitational earlier this month in Fleurimont, Quebec — placing fourth at the largest softball tournament in North America and the only 'AA' competition outside of the U.S.

The fact that Higgins faced do-or-die pressure all weekend — having lost its first game of the double-knockout event — made the top-four finish all the more noteworthy.

"We just refused to have our weekend end early," said Teague, whose new team strung together five must-win victories before finally bowing out to internationally-ranked Check King-Worth of Massachusetts.

Still nursing an ankle injury, the rural Miltonian didn't quite deliver his usual offensive punch at the Pif, which last year earned him all-star status. But he had absolutely no regrets about trading individual accolades for team success this summer.

"It was phenomenal how we came through in the clutch," said Teague, who plays a little bit of every position, except for outfield.

Among Higgins' wins in Quebec was an 11-9 decision over the powerhouse Toronto Orioles, who've claimed

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GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION

SEASONED SLUGGER: Accomplished local softball player Neil Teague is enjoying a thoroughly successful summer with his recently-established Higgins team.

Defensive-minded Magic keep on winning

Under-17 rep girls earn sixth shutout in league play by blanking Welland B 1-0

By Steve LeBlanc
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

The Under-17 Magic rep girls keep finding themselves in the win column despite continued problems finding the back of the net.

Unable to pull the trigger on nearly a dozen quality scoring chances at Lions Sports Park Wednesday night, Milton needed a penalty shot deposit by midfielder Erika Minkhorst to turn back Welland B 1-0.

The win lifted the Magic to 8-1 and into a tie for top spot in the South Region Soccer League's First Division with Kitchener B, who has a game in hand. It marked Milton's fourth 1-0 decision and sixth shutout victory in league play this season.

"We don't have a natural striker, but our defence has been very strong and the girls

have really gelled as a team," said head coach Louie DiPalma, whose team has already won twice as many league games as they did through all of 2005.

Fresh off a solid showing at the Cambridge Heritage Tournament, Milton didn't allow the visiting Wizzards a single shot on net Wednesday. That was no doubt welcomed by impromptu goalkeeper Alicia Hammond, who was filling in for an injured Caitlin O'Connor and only had to handle the ball three times all night.

That was due in large part to some top-notch play by Michelle Serafini, while usual forward Caroline Shaw dropped back and offered credible assistance to a somewhat

short-staffed defence.

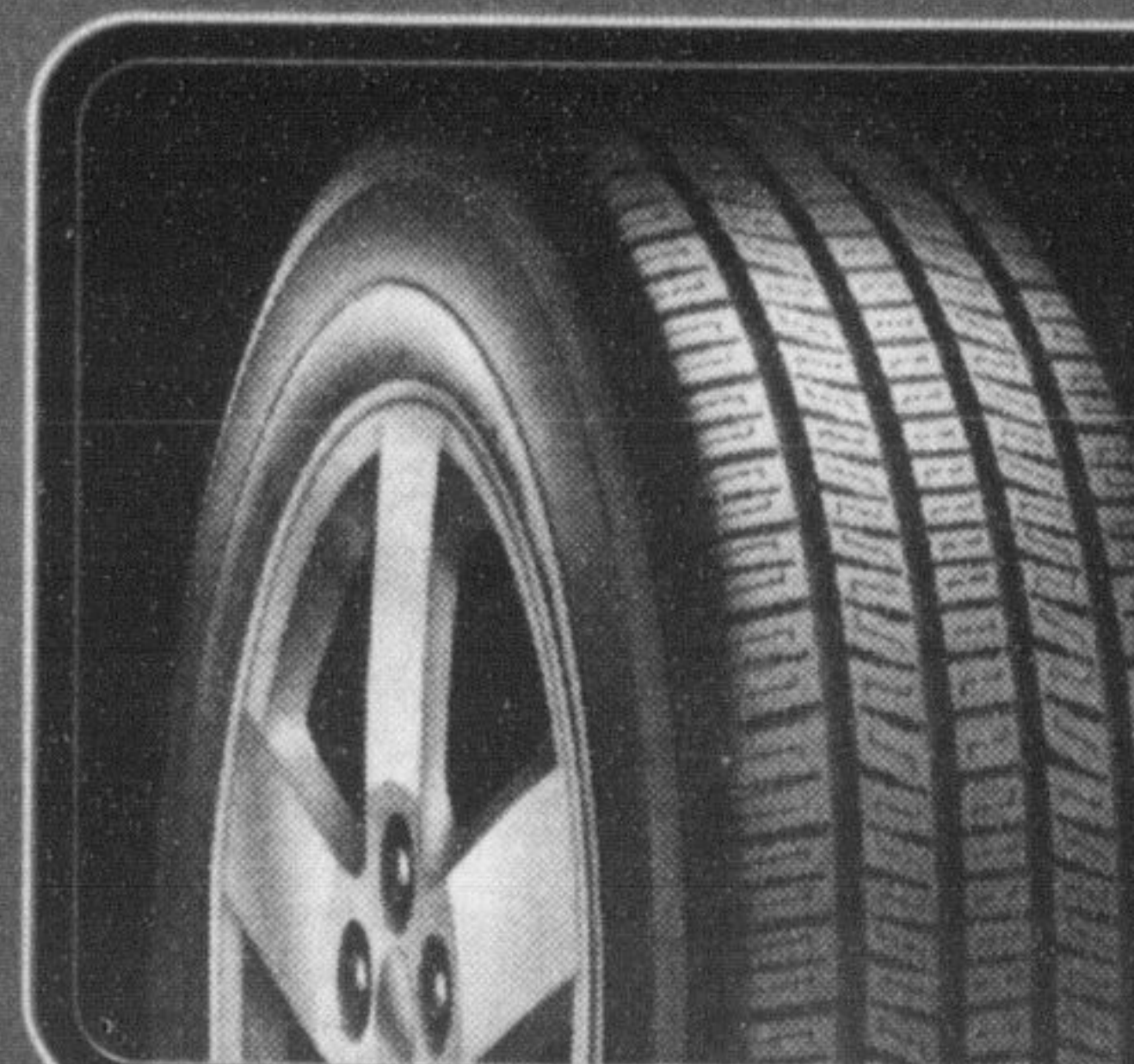
Minkhorst scored the evening's lone goal midway through the second-half — booting her penalty shot into the bottom left corner after Lindsey Atkinson was taken down on a huge rush — while she and Jillian Posavad kept the pressure on Welland with a handful of key scoring opportunities each.

The game also featured an impressive effort on the wing by Vanessa Malenfant and a brief second-half interruption by a wayward mouse that found its way onto the field.

The Magic will look to keep their winning ways going tomorrow night, when they take on Brams United B.

Milton Magic

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