

Player shortage forces Campbellville Mohawks to fold

By BRAD REAUME

There aren't too many two-team baseball towns: Los Angeles, Chicago, New York and Milton are among the few. At least Milton formerly had two teams, but with the loss of the Campbellville Mohawks it has been reduced to one.

Only the Milton Red Sox (formerly Royals) are left to represent the town in the Central Ontario Baseball Association (COBA) senior league.

Mohawks general manager Bill Dennis said the team folded due to a lack of players. Only eight said they would be returning and team organizers felt they needed a minimum of 15

players to remain in the league.

All is not lost, however. Dennis says the Mohawks will consider rejoining the league next year if they can secure enough interest from former players and newcomers.

But he stressed that the Mohawks will not settle for a catch-all squad incapable of carrying on where the proud teams of the past left off. The spectre of possibly fielding an inferior team was part of the decision to withdraw from the league, he noted.

"We didn't decide to fold until March 24," Dennis pointed out. "It was a sad day."

The Mohawks have been in the league since 1952, and with the exception of 1968 have

fielded a team every year since. According to Dennis, Campbellville has won 15 Ontario championships, has finished first 13 times and won 13 league playoff championships.

"The growth of slo-pitch has hurt senior baseball," he said. "The travel also got to a number of our players, because many of them lived out of town."

Campbellville was without minor baseball from 1977 until 1985, so the Mohawks were unable to count on a stream of local players moving up to the big team. And organizers have always been reluctant to recruit too heavily outside the village.

"The purpose is to provide the people of

Campbellville with a place to play, so it defeats the purpose to go with a team of out-of-towners," Dennis said.

He also stressed that the news is not a late surprise to COBA senior baseball executives. The team had let the league know they were having problems with player commitments in January.

Dennis said the fact the Mohawks didn't play in 1968, apparently for the same reason as in 1990, gives him some hope for next season.

With some key additions, notably in the battery, there remains a glimmer of optimism that Campbellville can rekindle what had become a rite of spring.

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Brett Elliott, of the Milton Sandstone juvenile squad, reaches for a loose puck in the early going of last Saturday's OHA Juvenile AAA Championship final. Goaltender Chris Reilly, of the York Toros, is knocked over in Elliott's enthusiasm to reach the puck. Elliott missed. More pictures of the tournament on page 32.

York beats Milton 12-7 for juvenile championship

By BRAD REAUME

For a little while it looked like Cinderella all over again.

Milton's Sandstone Transport juvenile reps were leading the Ontario Hockey Association (OHA) juvenile AAA championship game 3-1 over York Toros, representatives of the Metro Toronto Hockey League (MTHL). Then the glass slipper shattered.

Both teams showed a decided lack of goaltending and defence en route to a 12-7 win for York in the Saturday evening final at Memorial Arena. Milton's 3-1 lead collapsed midway through the first period under a barrage of goals which left the score 6-4 for York after one.

"Yeah, we sure did run out of gas," said Milton coach Barrie Elliot after the game. "We played with such high intensity for the whole tournament but we just ran out of gas."

Elliot was happy with his team's performance however, saying the squad wasn't expected to do very well. Milton lost its area final to Chinguacousy three games to none but played in the tournament because Sandstone was the host team.

Chinguacousy was in the tournament as the Ontario Minor Hockey Association (OMHA) champions. Also participating were the Thunder Bay Amateur Hockey Association (TBAHA) champion Fort William Hurricanes.

Milton lost their opening game to York 5-4 after building a 4-0 lead. "The kids sucked it up after being called chokers," said Elliot. "They never quit. Even near the end of the final, down five goals, they were yelling from the bench."

Milton beat Fort William 7-6 after losing to York. They played their last game of the round robin against Chinguacousy, the team that had beaten them in OMHA eliminations. Both teams went into the contest with 2-1 records but Milton needed to win by more than three goals to advance because Chinguacousy held that advantage in the goal differential.

In an exciting game played at 11 a.m. Saturday, only six hours prior to the final, Milton

• see TOROS on page 32

Slo-pitch tourney this Saturday

The Milton Red Sox senior baseball team is hosting a class DD slo-pitch tournament this Saturday. Games will be played from 9 a.m. at Brian Best Park, Omagh Park and Drumquin Park with the final scheduled for 5:30 p.m.

Glen Turner, coach of the Milton Red Sox, formerly the Milton Royals, said that the tournament has the maximum 24 teams entered. "We filled up really fast," he said. "We had to turn at least that many teams down."

The tourney is a fundraiser for the Red Sox, who this year reverted to the name they had prior to a 1980 change to the Royals. Turner said the team hopes to make this tournament an annual event.

There will be concession stands at the tournament grounds and the public is welcome to attend.

Photos by JOHN WARREN