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Sports

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THE RACER'S EDGE

Sweetpeas dump Streetsville to capture prestigious tournament

The Milton Greystone Grading junior T-ball team took home the championship trophy in the prestigious Canadian Open T-ball tournament in Kitchener recently.

It was the first ever championship for Milton's Sweetpeas in this tournament and it coincided with another first for the girls this season; their victory over the previously undefeated Streetsville squad. Milton edged Streetsville 24-23 for the title.

To reach the final Milton had to overcome a disappointing 30-24 loss to Streetsville in the first game on Friday. The girls had let a three run lead disappear and were beginning to believe that their rivals were unbeatable.

Saturday's games against Bloordale and Clarkson took on great importance as Milton had to launch a major offensive to score the number of runs necessary for a shot at winning their pool.

The girls responded with booming bats to defeat Clarkson 29-17 and Bloordale 30-18. Home runs by Jaclyn Sutman, Terri-Lee Dawson and a pair by the tournament's Most Valuable Player award winner, Nicole May, led the hit parade.

Sunday's semifinal against Bloordale resulted in a similar one-sided 28-16 victory for Milton. Carrie Ann Nichols and Gillian Dalziel, with three hits apiece, Jennifer Pender's four singles and the power of Erin Pfeiffer's two triples and home run led the Milton bats. That victory earned the girls first place in the pool and a trip to the championship final.

Fittingly, the opposition turned out to be Streetsville. It was showdown time. Milton's tightness was evident as Milton fell 10 runs behind by the end of the second inning.

Then, slowly but surely, Milton's determination took over. The trio of shortstop Jessica Wellstead, second baseman Jennifer McManus and first baseman Stefanie Rammo put up the Milton version of the steel curtain defence to shut down the Streetsville hitting. Catcher Jennifer Duff's sure-handed catches on the last batter plays helped to set up the Hollywood finish.

The top of the last inning found the

score tied. The defence came through again, as right fielder Jennifer Dumencu's catch of a potential extra base hit robbed Streetsville of two runs.

Rachael Colgan, who had won the junior girls longball contest, came through to drive in the winning run from the second last batter spot. She banged a deep gapper for an extra base hit.

After the heroics came the joy of gathering for the long awaited victory. With the sun breaking through the clouds and the Sweetpeas' smiles to match, they collected the championship trophies for their well-earned victory.

Don Byers aces par 3

He might not be ready for the tour, but Don Byers can only hope his run of luck continues.

Byers, of Marcellus Ave., shot a hole in one at the Oakville Executive Golf Course on Sunday. His wife Fay saw the shot, and other incredulous onlookers saw it trickle into the cup.

Don did the deed with a five iron on the 152-yard par three seventh hole. Fay called it a "beautiful, looping shot."

"I was disgusted," she added wryly. "I got a four on the hole."

The couple only began playing on a regular basis again after a long layoff four months ago. Although Fay saw the ball "running beautifully" from her vantage point at the women's tee, she couldn't tell just how well it had ended up.

"I think it went in," Don reportedly told her. "Don't be silly," she said she replied.

When they got to the green area, bystanders who had actually seen the ball plop into the hole told them about it.

However, Don's luck isn't always that good. He wasn't available for an interview early Monday evening. "He's stuck on the 401," Fay revealed.

Wet welcome to tennis championships

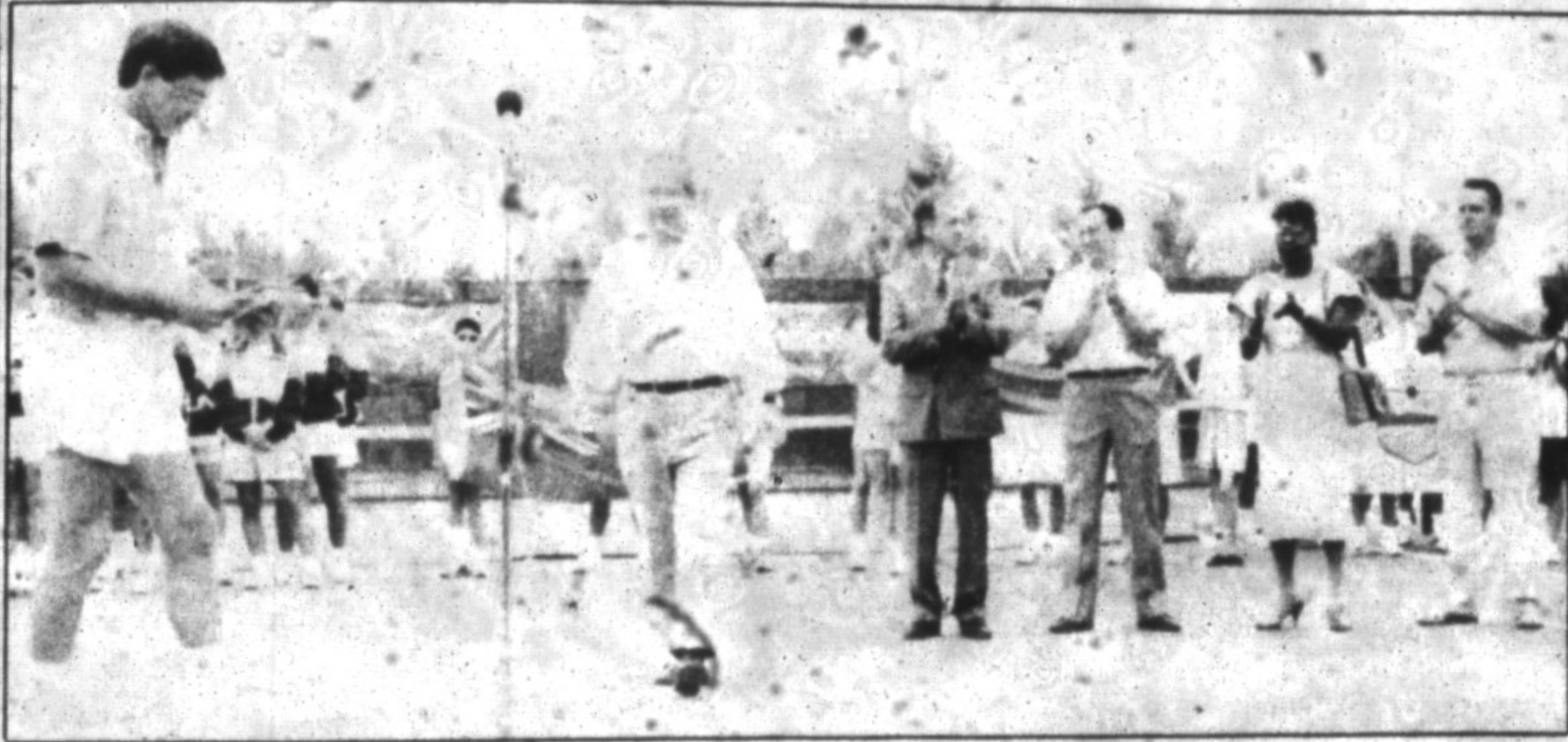
The Milton Tennis Club on Childs Drive follows the boy scout motto about being prepared. So when the skies opened up on the weekend and through the early part of the week (so far), organizers of the Phillips Junior Nationals under 16 tennis championship had a plan.

Matches were played at the Burlington Racquets Club, an indoor facility, during the downpours. As of Monday evening, some matches had been squeezed in at Milton. But no matter what the weather patterns, tournament spokesman Ron Furik vowed to have events back on schedule by Wednesday afternoon, despite delays due to shuttling athletes back and forth.

The finals take place Saturday, beginning with the girls under 16 championship at 10:30 a.m. The boys take the courts at noon. Admission to see some of the nation's finest young tennis players in action is free.

In the photo at right, Jimmy Douglas piped in the dignitaries at the opening ceremonies in Milton Sunday. Below, Bruce Hood, (left) makes his way to the podium, as Halton North MPP Walt Elliot joins him.

Photos by John Warren



Local rally driver killed in weekend highway accident

By ROB KELLY

For Ross Wood, the deep personal loss piles frustration atop grief. The Milton teacher, who served as navigator in one of the province's most promising car rally teams, watched in horror as his driver and friend Andy Browning died Sunday.

Mr. Browning, a 24-year-old Halton Hills resident, was killed in a head-on collision near Port Severn while returning from the Georgian Trials rally competition. Mr. Browning's girlfriend, Jane Maxwell, 21, also died in the accident.

"It can kind of make you say... there's no predicting, no apparent sense of justice," said a shocked Wood Monday. Wood first met Browning when the latter enrolled in one of his outdoor education classes. Later on Browning volunteered to help teach the program. "He was just wonderful. You could not wish for more."

And on the race course, Browning was an artist and a competitor of the first order, his partner remembered. "He was the most talented young driver I've ever seen."

Continuing to build the momentum that had established them as a major force in national rally competition, the duo piloted their Toyota Corolla GTS to first place in the production class and second overall at the weekend event. "It was a magnificent achievement," Wood said. "It was a fantastic rally weekend."

Only 20 minutes before the accident, the group had pulled off the road for a picnic. "Everybody was happy," Wood recalled.

Wood was only two cars ahead of his partner on Highway 69 when the accident occurred. Traffic was heavy, but moving steadily at approximately the posted 80 km/h limit. "We don't know exactly what happened. There was a head-on collision, a terrible accident."

Other drivers pulled off immediately to help but it was no use. "We spent an hour trying to save them. People just would not give up."

Police are still investigating, but the accident was so sudden, so unexpected that they "are having difficulty finding witnesses", Wood said.

Although only 24, Browning had more than 30 rallies to his credit. The team had been doing extremely well, despite facing competition with bigger, more powerful engines. They were "leading in the national (class) championship and walking away with it in Ontario," Wood said.

As far as the future goes, Wood has had little time to ponder his options. "I can't say. I just don't know. I know he would want me to carry on."

Because, Wood believes, Browning was not the type of man who would want the things he worked so hard to put in place abandoned — especially when others can still benefit from what he left behind.



Andy Browning (right) was killed Sunday in a highway traffic accident while returning from the Georgian Trials rally competition. Mr. Browning, 24, of Halton Hills, was the driver of a team alongside Milton navigator Ross Wood in the Canadian rally championship.