

A stroll through some parks on a fine summer night

from A WALK on page 19
thinks his team is starting to gel. "We'd like to think it's because of the coaching," he jokes, "but it's probably because the guys are getting to know each other better."

The contest is scoreless, just like the bulk of most soccer games. Kyle Gorman is the leading scorer for Apple, so I key on him. Suddenly, Josh Van Koot breaks down the right side. He's got a breakaway! He shoots! He hits the post! The game is starting to look interesting, but I'm getting tired just watching them.

Grinding into gravel

7:16 — Sam Sherratt School. Girls T-ball on three different diamonds. In the first game, Campus Auto Collision is up against Tremaine Trucking and leading 17-15.

Laura Ann Sheehan is at the plate for Campus, wearing sweater number 13. She hammers one into right field. Maybe extra bases. She rounds first, then sees the fielder has it. She tries to put on the brakes but slides on the gravel and falls heavily. She is hurt.

Incredibly, instead of staying down, she's still thinking of the team and crawls back safely to first base. She has to be taken out for a courtesy runner while the team medics tend to the injury, but she's right back at her position the next inning.

On the adjacent diamond, tiny T-ballers are going at it. They are five and six years old, cute as can be — and not bad players either.

Katelyn Johnston is playing shortstop for Tackmaster Equipment.

She's like a cat, pouncing on anything that comes anywhere near her. She's pretty good. Pounce. Pounce. Pounce. If a skunk happened to cross the field, I figure she'd pounce on that too.

Loretta Black is at the plate for Aim Lock and Safe. She's playing hurt, her hand stitched up from a recent cut. But she's a gamer and hammers the ball to the right side, making it easily to first. Another batter hits it to the pitcher, who gobbles it up and holds the ball high. She smiles a toothless grin and turns her eyes towards the stands for approval. She gets it. I forget to find out the score and hope it doesn't matter much to them either.

Finally, there's an Intermediate T-ball game on the last diamond, with C.M. Morris Design Ltd. facing Steve Condren Stables. It's starting to spit a little, which is why league convenor John Sinasac is keeping an eye on things. He wants to make sure there's no controversy if rain comes into play. One of the toughest things about his job is trying to make the teams fairly matched. He's tried, he says. At the end of three, C.M. Morris is leading 21-17.

7:45 — Bronte Meadows Park. A team is practising on the diamond but there are three soccer games in progress, all with kids about two feet tall. I watch a little from the car.

The nets are tiny, just like the players. One goalie is trying to climb his goalpost while the game is in progress. He changes tactics when the play gets to about 10 feet in front of him. He grabs the crossbar and

starts to swing from the top of the net. A coach seems to be explaining to him the general idea of the game. He comes down from his perch and jumps on the ball. There's hope yet.

7:53 — Thompson Road fields. There's been a game here in the Milton Girls Softball League. I'm too late. Everybody's leaving, but Key Centres coach Ted Ollerenshaw sticks around to explain what happened.

There's been a 15-15 tie in this novice playoff game between his team, which finished first in the regular season with an 11-1-2 record, and Rebekah Lodge. Elaine Neilson hit a home run for Key Centres and Tracy Toma hit two triples. Ollerenshaw, in the spirit of fair play, turns to the other team's score sheet, but I've had enough. I see two soccer games in the background. Time to go.

Vehicles locked here

8:08 — Arrive at Maplehurst Correctional Centre fields. I drive down the pathway past a sign that says "Vehicles MUST be Locked." I wonder why?

A dark-coloured Camaro has its lights on, but I don't go over and try to turn them off. I know the car MUST be locked. I leave mine unlocked, just to live dangerously.

This is a "boys midget baseball game between The Champion and Holy Rosary. It's a playoff matchup, with the winner going to the championship. You'd never know this was the most crucial of games. These guys are having fun. In fact, they're

having the most fun of any players I've seen all night.

There's Damien Campbell of The Champion, who broke his leg in a recent game. The players are taking turns signing his cast and kidding him about it.

There's Shawn Birnie, recalling how teammate Steve Allum made a great catch on him when they were both subbing for other teams, robbing him of a perfect night at the plate. There are the other team's coaches, joking with The Champion's fans. The Champion went through the season undefeated but they're having some trouble in this game, down 4-1. Still, everyone is in good spirits.

Ryan Smith reaches base and then steals second and third. Shawn Sosnowski drives him in, but The Champion is still down by two in the fourth inning.

Champion coach Mel Jansen agrees that they have a lot of fun. He says he was tentative about coaching this age group at the start of the year but now acknowledges that, "I've never coached a better bunch of kids."

That's it for me. I'm tired, and the golden arches are beckoning. I go back to my car, check the back seat and leave, remembering that I forgot to tell the people at the diamond that

one of them left their lights on. Oops.

I try to figure out why these guys seem to be having so much more fun than anyone else. Maybe it was just one of those nights. Or maybe it's because the dropoff rate is high when players reach their mid-teens. Those who still play must do so for no other reason than enjoyment.

A different game

8:28 — I get my dinner and stop to grab a coffee. I think I can hear pucks being shot in the nearby driveway of Mike Rusk. He plays a different game than anyone I've seen tonight. The Guelph Storm defenceman, drafted this summer by the Chicago Blackhawks, plays for keeps. I drive around the corner. His net is set up along with his big red backstop, but it's getting dark and I don't see him.

8:31 — I arrive home. It's been a good night. I wished I could have stayed and watched every game. I know this doesn't always hold true, but I didn't hear one negative comment directed toward a player from a fan or a coach. Nothing but encouragement. That's pretty good. I think. I turn on the TV, but then remember there's no Blue Jays game. I look for any sport to watch. Even a soccer game.

Jaycees go to T-ball final

The Milton Jaycees Jr. T-ball team pulled out all the stops to make it to the final of the Canadian Open T-ball tournament in Kitchener recently.

Milton won five games in a row before bowing out to the Waterloo White Sox in the final.

Milton was extremely solid defensively, with five shutout innings and four more in which they only allowed the opposition just one run.

Milton defeated Byron (London), Erin Mills, Clarkson, Hamilton's

Inch Park and Forest Hill.

Team members are: Andrew Claesens and Mike Carito (pitchers), Peter Schultz (catcher), Doug Pottruff (first base), Barry Kosmalski (second), Christopher Coates (third), Darryl (Joe) Teed at shortstop, Dave Tielemans and Kenny Hume (left field), Joshua Wagemann and Nathaniel Wicken (centre field), Drew Evans and Mark Wilson (right field). Coaches are Jim Kosmalski, Bob Pottruff, Steve Wagemann and Harry Wicken.

Tech Trek off to championships

from TECH on page 19
Milton managed until the sixth inning, when Burne lined a one-out double and advanced to third on a passed ball. Grigor brought him home with a single to put Milton in the lead 7-4.

Hamilton tried to mount a comeback in the top of the seventh with a leadoff double. When a pitch

bounced in the dirt away from Page at home plate, the runner tried to take third. Not a wise move. Page picked up the ball and threw a strike to third baseman Nick Aalbers, who applied the tag. Another strikeout, Walker's ninth, and a ground ball to Langille at second and the game was over.

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WEDNESDAY AUGUST 25

MILTON THREE PITCH LEAGUE
7:00 RACERS EDGE vs XEBEC
8:15 SUBWAY vs FAT FREDDY'S
9:30 MOVIOLA vs MILTOWNE/GT
MILTON INTERCHURCH SOFTBALL
7:00 GRACE vs ALLIANCE 1 (E. C. Drury)
7:00 ST. JOHN'S vs HILLCREST (Robert Baldwin)

THURSDAY AUGUST 26

MILTON THREE PITCH LEAGUE
7:00 MILTOWNE/GT vs DICKENS
8:15 RACERS EDGE vs SUBWAY
9:30 MILTON PRO SPORT vs RYAN'S EXPRESS
MILTON INTERCHURCH SOFTBALL
7:00 HILLCREST vs PENTACOSTAL B (Drumquin)
7:00 ALLIANCE 1 vs ALLIANCE 2 (E.C. Drury)

MONDAY AUGUST 30

MILTON INTERCHURCH SOFTBALL
7:00 BOSTON vs ST. JOHN'S
7:00 PENTACOSTAL A vs ALLIANCE 1

TUESDAY AUGUST 31

MILTON THREE PITCH LEAGUE
7:00 SUBWAY vs FAT FREDDY'S
8:15 RACERS EDGE vs MILTOWNE/GT
9:30 MILTON PRO SPORT vs GORRUD
MILTON INTERCHURCH SOFTBALL
7:00 HOLY ROSARY vs PENTACOSTAL A (Drumquin)
7:00 KNOX vs ST. PAUL'S (E. C. Drury)
7:00 ST. GEORGE'S vs PENTACOSTAL B (Robert Baldwin)

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