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Pat Lynch inks deal with Blue Jays

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
 Special to The Champion

Pat Lynch has already played at SkyDome, but when he returns for a follow-up performance it will likely be with the home team.

The 6-foot-3, 185-pound Milton pitcher turned pro last Thursday evening, when he signed a one-year contract with the Toronto Blue Jays for the 1997 season. He was picked up as a free agent, after being passed over at the June amateur draft.

The deal comes just two months after the 18-year-old and his Milton District High School Mustangs bombed the Woodland Rams 8-0 at SkyDome in the Bob Prentice/Blue Jay Cup finals.

The Mustangs' loss will be the Jays' gain.

"It's a very attractive deal, which includes them (the Jays) paying a portion of my university tuition next fall. Playing for the home team was always a dream of

mine," said Lynch, who did not wish to quote a dollar amount on his contract. Present at his signing were area scout Jim Ridley and Bill Byckowski, the Jays' director of Canadian scouting.

The deal was signed after an invitation-only workout at SkyDome earlier in the day.

"I got a call from the Colorado Rockies the day after I signed with Toronto," adds Lynch, who will complete grade 13 at Milton District this year.

Being able to pursue a university degree and having a percentage of his tuition paid for was the determining factor in the local pitcher's decision to become a Blue Jay.

"That's the only way they got me," said Lynch. "I was a little surprised that I wasn't taken in the June draft but not that hurt, because I always had plans to go to university."

"Considering I wasn't drafted, the offer with the Jays was very attractive."

Lynch had been courted by U.S. schools

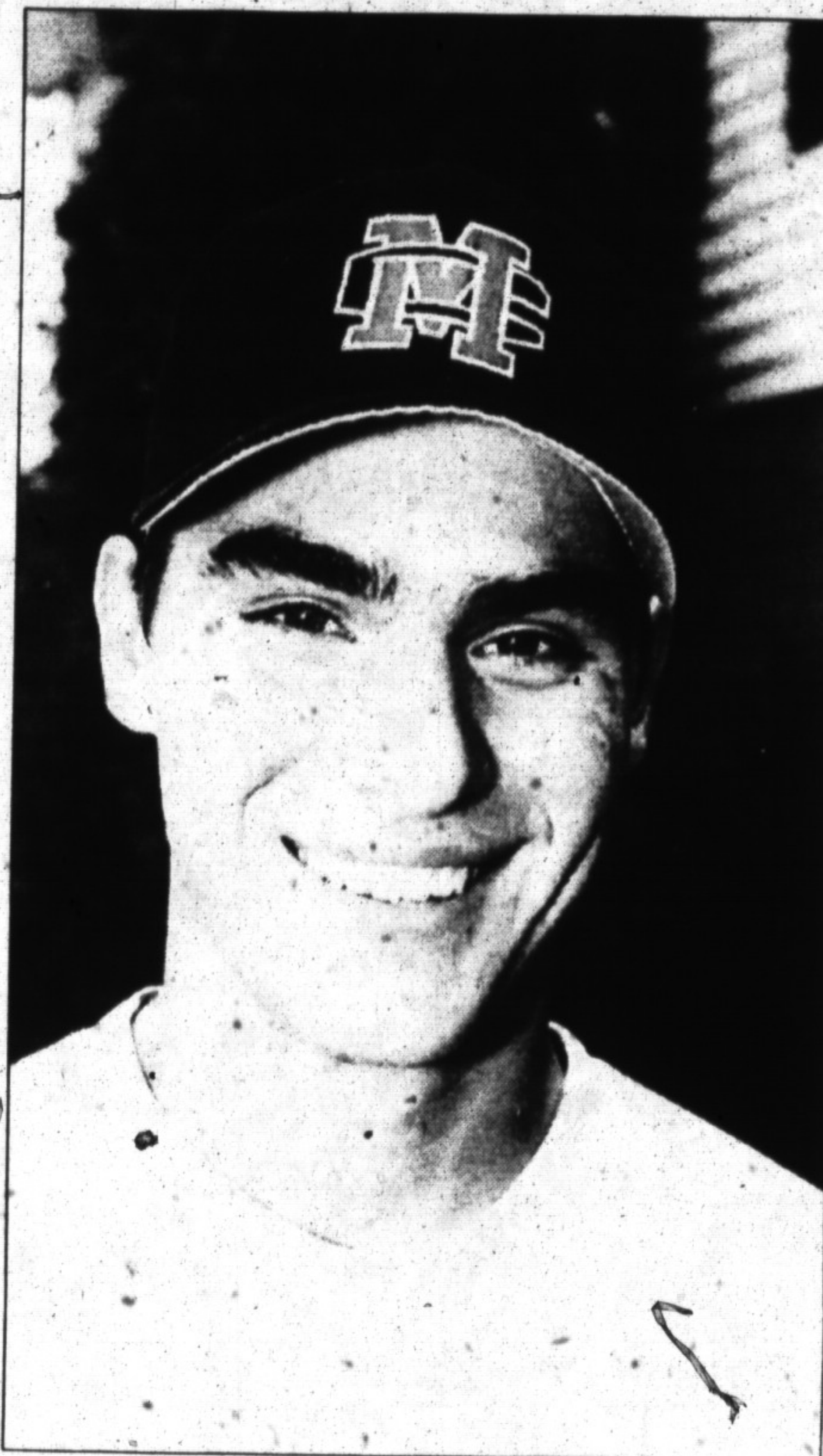
such as Michigan, New Mexico and Ball State, but will now pursue a degree a little closer to home. Before that happens he'll spend next summer in Medicine Hat, Alberta with the Jays' rookie league team.

Lynch's recent signing is the crowning achievement in a stellar 1996 season, during which he shone with both the Mustangs and the Hamilton Blue Jays.

After posting an unblemished 8-0 record with MD and leading them to the Bob Prentice/Blue Jay Cup championship, he went 10-1 with Hamilton and helped them qualify for the Connie Mack World Series in Farmington, New Mexico.

The next few months will include a hectic conditioning schedule for Lynch, as he plans to improve his stamina and endurance for next summer.

"I'm hoping to play class A ball in 1998. Now that I've signed with Toronto, it's really up to me how fast I progress up the ranks," he said.



Pat Lynch is one happy guy after signing a deal with Toronto.

Peewees earn silver

That's about as close as you can get

Milton's peewee rep baseball team brought home some hardware from last weekend's Ontario A Championships in Orillia, despite ending the tournament on a somewhat 'foul' note.

Down 2-1 with just two outs to go in the finals Sunday, Michael Volpe smacked a line drive down the right field that at first appeared to drive in two runs and give Milton the championship over St. Thomas.

However, a delayed foul ball call gave their opposition new life, which their pitcher took full advantage of by striking out Volpe on the next pitch and then getting Milton's next batter to fly out.

Milton had bombed St. Thomas 11-1 just a few hours earlier. Having lost to them in the tournament opener Friday evening, they needed back-to-back victories Sunday to wrestle the title away.

Instead, Milton took home the silver medal — and concluded a stellar 1996 season which included winning three tournaments, the Central Ontario Baseball Association (COBA) playdowns and the Ontario Championship Qualifying Series over Hamilton.

"It was an absolutely outstanding season, a total team effort. I am very proud of these boys," said manager Frank Houlihan, who led the team with coaches Peter Grimwood, Jeff Harper and Dave McComb.

After taking a 5-3 loss to St. Thomas in game one — which was decided by a three-run home run off Volpe in the last inning — Milton played with their backs to the wall all weekend in the

eight-team double knockout tournament.

They left nothing to chance in game two, humbling Sudbury 13-2 with superb pitching by Bryan McComb, a 4-for-4 plate performance by Evan Jeans and two hits each by Jeff Schouten and Thomas Houlihan. But they needed extra innings to dispose of Owen Sound 7-6.

Jeans followed up his perfect record in game two with a game winning homer to straightaway centre to keep his club alive. Ryan Harper also used the long ball to give his team three runs and an early lead while Paul Duff worked the last four innings on the mound and earned the win. Kevin Cooper also turned in some solid pitching early on.

Volpe recovered from game one's heartbreaking end to lead Milton past Peterborough 4-2 in game four Sunday morning. He also collected two hits, as did Duff and Schouten. In addition, Mark Black made several key defensive plays from third-base, including a couple in the last inning to stop Peterborough's rally attempt.

This set up a return match with St. Thomas. Before falling in their third go-around, Milton dominated their second meeting. Duff pitched a one-hitter and struck out eight while Jeans, Volpe, Cooper, Grimwood and David Brooks all had multi-hit efforts.

Also competing on this year's team was Brad Finkbeiner.

STANDINGS

Milton Flag Football League Standings

	W	L	T
Dicken's	10	5	0
Halton Pool & Spa	10	5	0
Don Cherry's	10	5	0
Charlie Fitzwhiskey's	7	8	0
Waltzing Weasel	7	8	0
Bruce Hood Travel	7	7	0
Remax	0	16	0

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