Hard work paying off as baseball House League grows

MIDLAND—If it's not one thing it's another for Mike Wraith, Midland Minor Baseball house league convenor, a man who is taking his best shot at tackling the recurring difficulties his league encounters.

And it's a lonely job. There are close to 90 players, including five girls, aged 8-15 competing in the six-team league, and Wraith was convinced to head up the organization for the third year in a row when no one else cared to take the responsibility.

Last year the league had trouble filling the rosters. This year, there is an abundance of enthusiastic players, but a lack of coaches, umpires and parental interest.

In the last few weeks, there have been enough volunteers found so at least each team has someone heading it. According to Wraith, though, the ideal situation would be to have a couple of coaches or an assistant for each team.

"We had some young guys come in to help us out, and we now have a coach for all the teams," Wraith said. "The coaches aren't always readily available, though, so it would be nice to have someone there to help out the coach or even coach if one of the guys couldn't make it out."

Parental interest is picking up slightly, Wraith said, but most of the time the kids are just dropped off at the curb and retrieved when the game is over.

"I can't understand why they wouldn't want to see the kids play the game," Wraith said. "We're supplying quite a few players to the all-star clubs, which is pretty good ball."

The umpire problem is the most urgent for Wraith at the moment. There are presently only two working officials for the league, both from the Bantam all-star team.

"We need umpires," Wraith said. "No (Ontario Baseball Association) card is necessary but it's good fun and good training if anyone wanted to apply for their card."

House league games are played every Wednesday at Parkview Public School, beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Wraith said Parkview is the only available park the league can use. "We had to put up a fight to keep the arena diamond from being levelled," he said.

"There's also good possibilities for a diamond at Midland Secondary School, and we'd like to see the Simcoe County Board of Education do something about that one."

The Midland Minor Baseball Association held its Tag Days during the Sidewalk Sale on the weekend, and part of the revenue generated will go to house league ball.

"We raised about $700 last year from tags, and this year we hope to get $1,000 for equipment and facilities," Wraith said. "The cost of sponsorship has remained the same for the past three years, but we still have the Association carrying one team. Costs are high, and one of the best ways to battle it is by generating interest in the league from everyone involved."

Wraith said it's important that the league survive as a "farm system" for the all-star clubs, but, he added, "if no one is going to help, it just might fall on its face."

House league scores for July 12: Smith's Mobile Homes 15, Harrison Metal Works 14; Blue Jays 11, Avco 9; Royal Bank 13, French Dry Cleaners 10. Standings: Royal Bank, 8 points; Smith's Mobile Homes, 8; French Dry Cleaners 6; Blue Jays 6; Avco 2; Harrison Metal Works 0.

Sixty entrants in Centennial golf tourney

MIDLAND — More than sixty entrants from 10 Simcoe County golf clubs will take part in Thursday's first annual Midland Centennial Junior Invitational golf tournament at Midland Golf and Country Club.

The Midland Centennial Committee has donated two trophies — one for boys' low gross and one for girls' low gross — heading the prize list which includes a golf bag, clothing and other golf accessories.

Starting time for the tournament is 9 a.m., and post-entries will be accepted by contacting Paul Quilty, junior golf coordinator at Midland Golf and Country Club.

Indusmin Bantams level Thornbury 14-5

Usually a baseball coach is full of happy tidings when his team whomps their opponents but Midland Indusmin Bantam helmsman Fred Scott is somewhat aggravated by the need to play against such clubs as Thornbury, which his team levelled 14-5.

Thornbury is in last place in the North division of the York Simcoe Baseball League and Scott says it's bad for everyone involved that a place with such a small amount of players to draw from must be subjected to constant humiliation from larger centres such as Barrie, Orillia, Midland and Collingwood.

"It's nice to see our guys play and win," Scott said. "But it's not a challenge anymore. We drive for an hour, get no competition when we get there, and drive back. It's a lot of time, money and effort for practically nothing."

Flesherton used to be in the same sorry spot, Scott said, but they dropped out of the York Simcoe league and found another in which they could compete.

"The league Flesherton is in now would be more accessible to Thornbury, so it would only be practical for them to join it," he said.

In the game, Midland outhit Thornbury 14-3, and committed four errors to Thornbury's 10.

Craig Pender pitched the entire game for the win, and Brian Garner poked the game's only home run to left center field.

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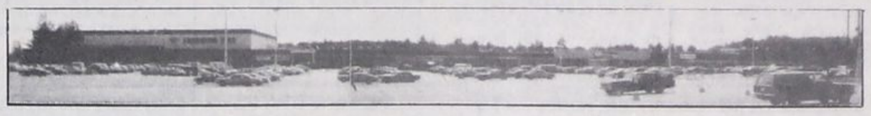

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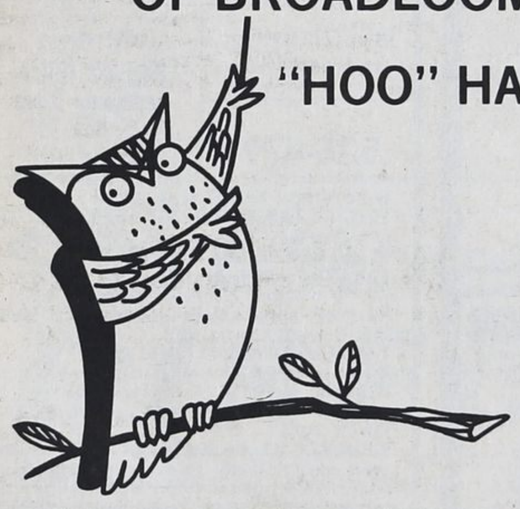

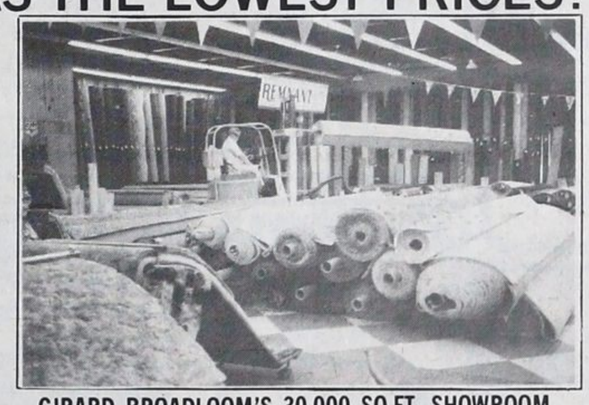

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