



Angels let fly

## Juniors zapped 16-4

The Midland Juniors' one-game winning streak came to an abrupt halt Friday as Orillia stung the local squad 16-4 in their shortened South-Simcoe Baseball League home opener at Tiffin Park.

The newly-formed Midland squad appeared as though they were up to the task after their first try at the plate when Jerry Richard tripled home Dean Proulx and John Roi to narrow a three-run burst by Orillia in the top of the first.

But, unfortunately for the young club and manager Dick Thompson, who remains confident that "things will come in time," Midland's first-inning response proved to be an illusion.

The more experienced Orillia club struck back with 13 runs over the next three innings and their menacing roll was temporarily stopped in the fifth before the game was called due to darkness with one out in the sixth.

Midland's two other

runs came in the fourth inning, when Craig Pender and Dean Proulx came up with a double apiece.

Bob Dymment, one of two senior-age players on Friday's 12-man Midland roster (with Malcolm Kelly), started on the mound for the home side.

But Dymment's style was to Orillia's liking, and, after the opening inning, which featured a two-run home run by Jeff Epps, and a couple of second-inning walks and singles, Dymment was pulled in favor of Craig Pender for the innings' final out.

Pender didn't fare much better, though, and the now-confident Orillia bats caught him for two more runs before the second frame was finished.

From then on, it was all practice.

Of course, practice can never hurt, and as far as Thompson is concerned, every minute of time spent with all ten or so Juniors on the field together is invaluable to the future decision-making of the

coaching staff.

And that staff may be in for a lot of decision-making in their next clash, a double-header Sunday in Barrie.

Barrie, a Juvenile club, is a powerhouse in the eight-team loop. In a recent matchup they demolished Beeton 35-2 - the same club Midland slammed 8-1 in their season opener.

In other words, the Midlanders can expect no mercy in Sunday's pair of games - and Thompson and company hope they don't have to beg for any.

Thompson says he'll go with Ernie Desroches to start the pitching assignment in Sunday's twin-bill opener, and follow-up with Pender and "whoever else is needed."

Another home game scheduled for last Sunday against Ivy was moved to Monday due to rain, but was again shifted to late June due to soggy field conditions at Tiffin.

Next home game will probably go June 6 (Sunday) against Collingwood.

Elmvale Merchants Angels pitcher Joanne McGinnis fires one in on a Midland Therriens Furniture batter during opening-round play in Saturday's World Famous Dock Lunch Ladies' Softball

Invitational at McGuire Park in Penetanguishene. The Angels trampled Therriens 9-0 in this one and strolled leisurely to the championship with a final 9-2 victory over the Stoneleigh Pontiacs.

## Competition 'wasn't there' - coach Easy \$250 time for Angels

It may have been the easiest \$250 ever earned by a ladies' softball team.

It was drizzling, it was soggy, it was cold, but not even the weather factor could put a chink in the armor of the Elmvale Merchants Angels as they rolled to the championship of the annual World Famous Dock Lunch Invitational Ladies' Softball Tournament Saturday at McGuire Park in Penetanguishene.

The Angels splattered Midland Therrien's Furniture 9-0 in their opener, pounded Collingwood 8-0 in their second outing on a perfect-game performance by pitcher Anna Storie, and tossed off a 9-2 thrashing of the

Midland Stoneleigh Pontiacs in the final for the \$250 top prize.

Stoneleigh, which defeated Gignac's Muffler Shop (defending Georgian Bay league champions) 8-7 to advance to the final, earned \$175 for their runner-up standing. A \$100 cheque and a consolation trophy was picked up by Collingwood with a 5-2 decision over Rama. The Rama team were awarded \$75.

In the consolation semi-final matchups, Collingwood trounced Therrien's 15-4 and Rama ousted Craighurst 5-1.

Only seven teams took part in the tournament (Collingwood received a bye into the

semi-finals and won a toss over Gignac's for a shot at the consolation), down from an originally hoped-for 16.

Organizer Sandy Dubeau of Gignac's said the rest of the 25 squads she sent applications to simply weren't ready for a tournament this early in the season.

The low number of entries knocked the prize money in half and, combined with the ugly weather, dampened the spirits of the champion Angels.

"Sure, we won it, but the competition wasn't there," said Elmvale manager John Brown. "Everybody kept dropping out. We didn't play as well as we could have and I

don't think the calibre of ball was what it might have been if there were 16 teams. It was unfortunate we were even in it as far as the rest of the teams were concerned."

Brown said everybody had to play under the same lousy weather conditions, but that, along with the major competitive gap between the Angels and the rest of the field, made the event less than spectacular for players and fans alike.

"When it gets like that, you don't even feel like playing," Brown said.

Storie's perfect game against Collingwood was the only action she saw Saturday. Joanne McGinnis was in for the other two games.

## Softball is dying: Brown

Elmvale Merchants Angels manager John Brown says softball is dying in Ontario.

Fresh off Saturday's tournament victory in the World Famous Dock Lunch Ladies' Invitational in Penetanguishene in which the Angels swept three games straight, Brown says the sport is slowly being wiped out by defections to slow-pitch and soccer and there are no young players coming up.

More specifically, says Brown, is that there are no softball pitchers being developed through the minor ranks as there once was. "It's pretty much obvious that softball's a

dying sport," Brown said following his club's tournament win in which they scored 26 runs and allowed only two. "There just aren't any pitchers around any more. The kids are all going to slow-pitch, where there are plenty of fielders being developed but pitching skills are lost, or to soccer, which is a cheaper sport to play."

As a result of the decline in available talent, top players are drawn to only a few teams and the competitive atmosphere is shattered.

The Angels certainly have no pitching problems just yet: during the weekend

tournament, Joanne McGinnis pitched the club's first and final blowouts and Anna Storie pitched a perfect game in between.

But after a while, Brown suggested, wiping everybody off the map gets boring - for players and for fans, and, inevitably, for young kids who might take an interest in the sport.

The Angels made it to the Intermediate A provincial finals last season, earning a silver medal. As a result, they've been forced up to Senior B ball for the All-Ontario championship route, and there are only a couple of

other squads in the area that can come close to competing at that level in league play.

In fact, says Brown, in their eight-team Barrie and District loop only two other teams can give Elmvale a good game.

To illustrate the point, the Angels have had two season games so far. They won the first 9-0 over Barrie Kolmar last Tuesday and crushed Cooper Tool 16-0 in their next outing.

The two runs by Stoneleigh Motors in the tourney championship Saturday were the first scored against the Angels in five games this year.