



Canadian Snooker star Cliff Thorburn (right) lines up a shot in the game room of Royal Canadian Legion branch 459 as friend Wayne Simpson of Stouffville watches. Thorburn, a former world champion who resides in Markham, demonstrated his skill with a cue during a visit to the Stouffville hall last week. He plans to soon establish a snooker club to teach the game to young players. —Kelly Connelly

Snooker star visits Legion

STOUFFVILLE — World champion snooker player Cliff Thorburn dropped in at the Stouffville Legion last week for a friendly game.

The 'champ' was a guest of Wayne Simpson of Stouffville. Thorburn, a resident of Markham, won the world title in 1980. He's the first Canadian to capture this event and the first player to have played a 'perfect game' in that competition.

As one of the top sports celebrities in England, he can hardly walk down the street there without being asked to sign autographs.

Although he enjoys living in

Canada, Thorburn said "if you're good at something, you can't stay in one country and make a living unless you play ice hockey."

He plans to move to England permanently in the near future. When Thorburn began playing

snooker professionally, he was 16 years old. At the time a player had to be 18, so he "had to speak in a deeper voice."

His winnings for this year total approximately \$400,000. Figuring that he has at least

another 10 years to play snooker professionally, Thorburn plans to open a club to teach his trade to youngsters.

"I find Canada a great break from my professional life in England," he concluded.

Shortie cracks her first hit

Stouffville Ladies' Fun League softball scores, July 15:

McNeil Pharmaceutical beat Canadian Tire 20-12. Canadian Tire homered by Sand Schell and a grand slam homer for Joan Robson. Homers by Marg Wilcox and Laura Duguid. Three consecutive

great catches by Ida Bouchard and first career hit for Shortie Davies, all of McNeil.

Fletcher's beat Lee Sand and Gravel 23-21. Homers by Jan Balclopp(2), Sue McDowell and Joan Hewlett of Fletcher's, Beth

Mullen, Rhonda Jordan, and Ramona Reesor of Lee Sand.

Magna Concord narrowly beat Green's Restaurant 24-23. Two homers each by Sharon Duperon and Cathy Harding of the Green's, one homer by Carol Watson for Magna.

Sideline Comment

Is fastball dying?

BY KELLY CONNELLY

Howie Burkholder came into *The Tribune* office recently to identify the softball players in a team picture. Out of the blue he said "fastball is dying in this town."

Interesting summation by a man who gives much of his spare time trying to keep it alive. Howie coaches the Stouffville Legion boys' bantam fastball team. He also plays on the Markham Menno's church league squad.

It's true Stouffville is fielding less and less representative (rep) fastball teams every year. Last season, minor softball had five all-star clubs. This summer only two surfaced — Stouffville Stingers (sophomore girls) and Stouffville Legion (bantam boys).

Why do teams fold? There are many reasons — lack of interest (not enough players), lack of coaches and volunteers, players sign with out-of-town teams, others move up an age group, some kids move back to house league.

NO ROLE MODEL FOR KIDS

All of the above are quite feasible, but there's another more potent explanation says Howie: with the growing popularity of SLO-PITCH and the scarcity of men's fastball teams in the immediate area, minor fastball players don't have a role model to look up to anymore.

The incentive to someday play on your big brother's or sister's rep team isn't there because no such team exists. Howie suggests a growing number of youngsters are becoming disenchanted with rep fastball and turning to other sports or going back to house league.

Still, the increasing membership in slow-pitch can't be ignored. Sure, the game may never win the respect of die-hard fastball and hardball fans. Anyone can lob a ball on the pitcher's mound, right? Even more, it seems to have a reputation for attracting players who like to party more off the field than on.

RETURN TO ORTHODOX PITCHING

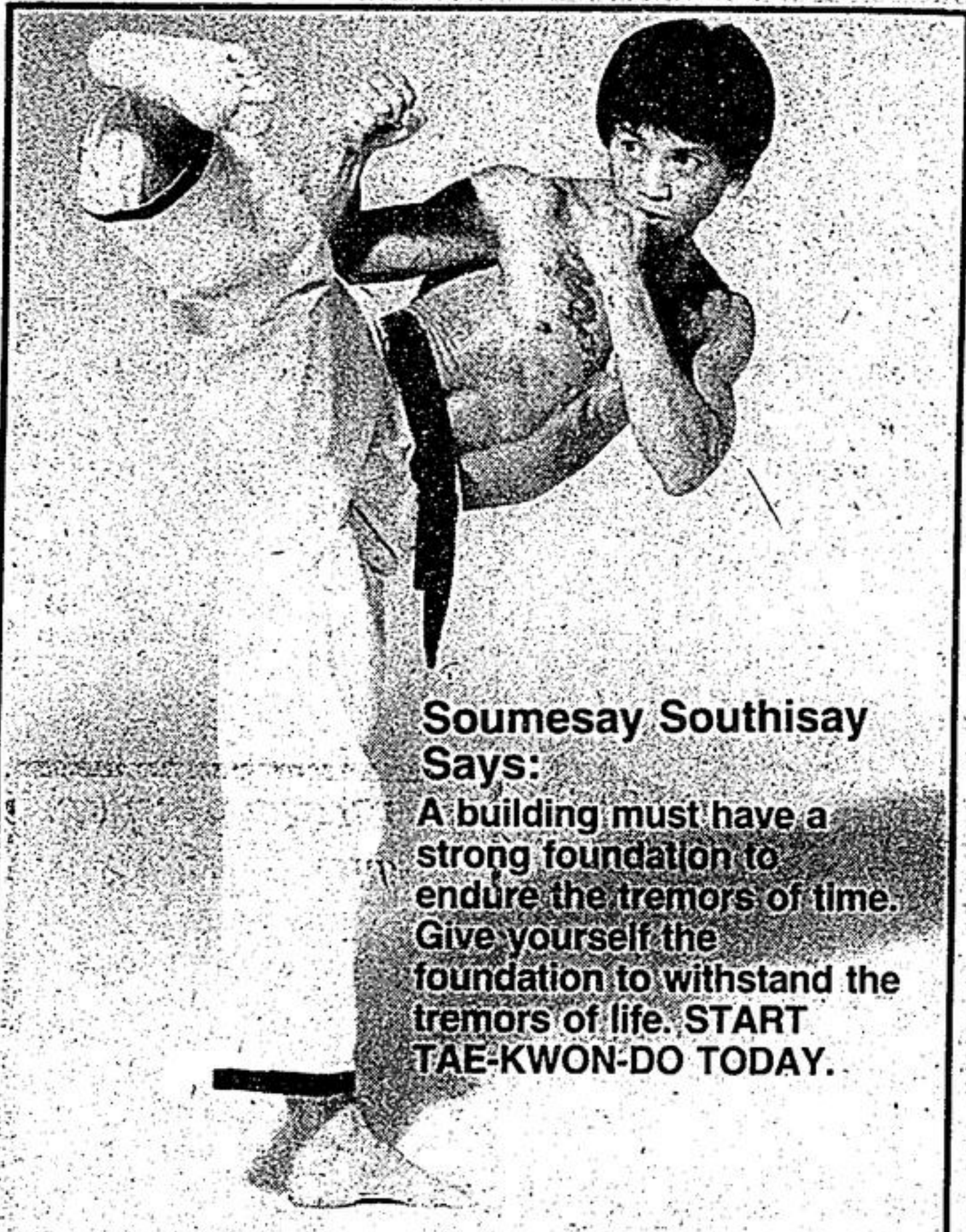
But statistics tell a different story. In Simcoe (south of Brantford) where there used to be 12 men's fastball teams, there are now 32 SLOW-PITCH squads. In Collingwood, even the youngsters are playing organized slow-pitch.

In Quebec, many teams are abandoning slow-pitch and fastball altogether and going back to orthodox pitching. (Orthodox means releasing the ball behind your back without passing your hips. No windmills or overhead throws are allowed.)

Bill Martin, registrar for the men's Ontario Amateur Softball Association (OASA), blames today's ex-fastballers and veterans for abandoning fastball.

"The person reaches 35 or 40 years of age and instead of going on to help the fast-pitch kids, he joins a slo-pitch team," noted Martin. "We need the Joes to look after the kids and they say 'to hell with the kids', (the parents) are out to please themselves."

Do you think fastball is dying? Are enough Stouffville parents or volunteers in general coming forward to help out with teams? Let us know. Call the *Tribune* sports hotline at 640-2100.



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"QUALITY REMEMBERED LONG AFTER PRICE IS FORGOTTEN"

Roadracer shoots for pro bike circuit

Whitchurch-Stouffville's Mike Marcelli will part of the field for Canada's premier motorcycle roadracing event — the Molson Superbike Challenge.

Round two of the Castrol National Championships goes Saturday and Sunday (July 26 and 27) at Shannonville Motorsport Park at Shannonville, Ont.

Marcelli has progressed quickly through the competitive ranks since he entered the sport last year after purchasing his first bike in 1984.

After four of 11 events in his first full season, the amateur roadracer has powered his 750 Production-rated Yamaha to a tie for 14th position overall in this class of the Castrol Eastern Challenge series.

The 24-year-old R.R. 2, Stouffville resident is employed full-time as a construction worker and confines his racing activities to his spare time. But he but hopes to eventually graduate to the professional racing circuit.

"With the next two years, I hope to turn pro and then try it down in the (United) States because they have more to offer," Marcelli said. "It seems to be a more demanding sport there (in the U.S.) than here."

One of his immediate goals is to qualify for the prestigious 1987 Daytona Bike Week, featuring racing at speeds exceeding 140 kilometres per hour.

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to Steeles Avenue, where service terminates. Transfer to the Vaughan Transit bus and get off at the corner of Islington and Davidson Drive. Call Vaughan Transit at (416) 832-2281 for schedule.

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If you can't be there, watch it live on CTN. Check your local listings for times.

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