

# Slowpitch more than game for Paul Murray

By BRUCE STAPLEY  
Mention the term 'slowpitch' in Stouffville and the name Paul Murray is sure to come up.

The 33-year-old bachelor has been helping guide the course of the popular summer game for eight years in this area. He is a member of the A&S Raiders men's slowpitch team and has acted as president of the York-Durham Men's slowpitch league for six years.

A self-admitted baseball enthusiast, he is big on both the Raiders and the league of which they are a part.

"The league has been solid. We haven't lost a team in seven years and we've had several new teams join. And the executive works well together; we all decide what we're going to do."

The Raiders, who will host their seventh annual slowpitch tournament over the Victoria Day weekend at the town park, have made a positive impression on the town's recreation programs, says Murray.

"We made a contribution to the Recreation Centre and we put a fence beside diamond three, as well as rebuilding the scoreboards at diamonds two and three."

As league president, Murray concedes there is a lot of work involved, but maintains it is a labor of love.

"I represent the league at community ball meetings. When you're dealing with 11 teams, there are lots of individuals and lots to do, what with tournaments, awards, dances, uniforms, registration, etc."

### Familiar face

His involvement in slowpitch has made his a familiar face around town.

"They know me pretty well at the recreation office. They are good people to work with. And the volunteers, like Carol Watson who schedules diamond allocation, do an enormous job."

Murray's interest in baseball goes beyond his own league. He is a big booster of all town leagues that involve adults.

"When I first moved to Stouffville 10 years ago, I played in the Monday Night Men's League and

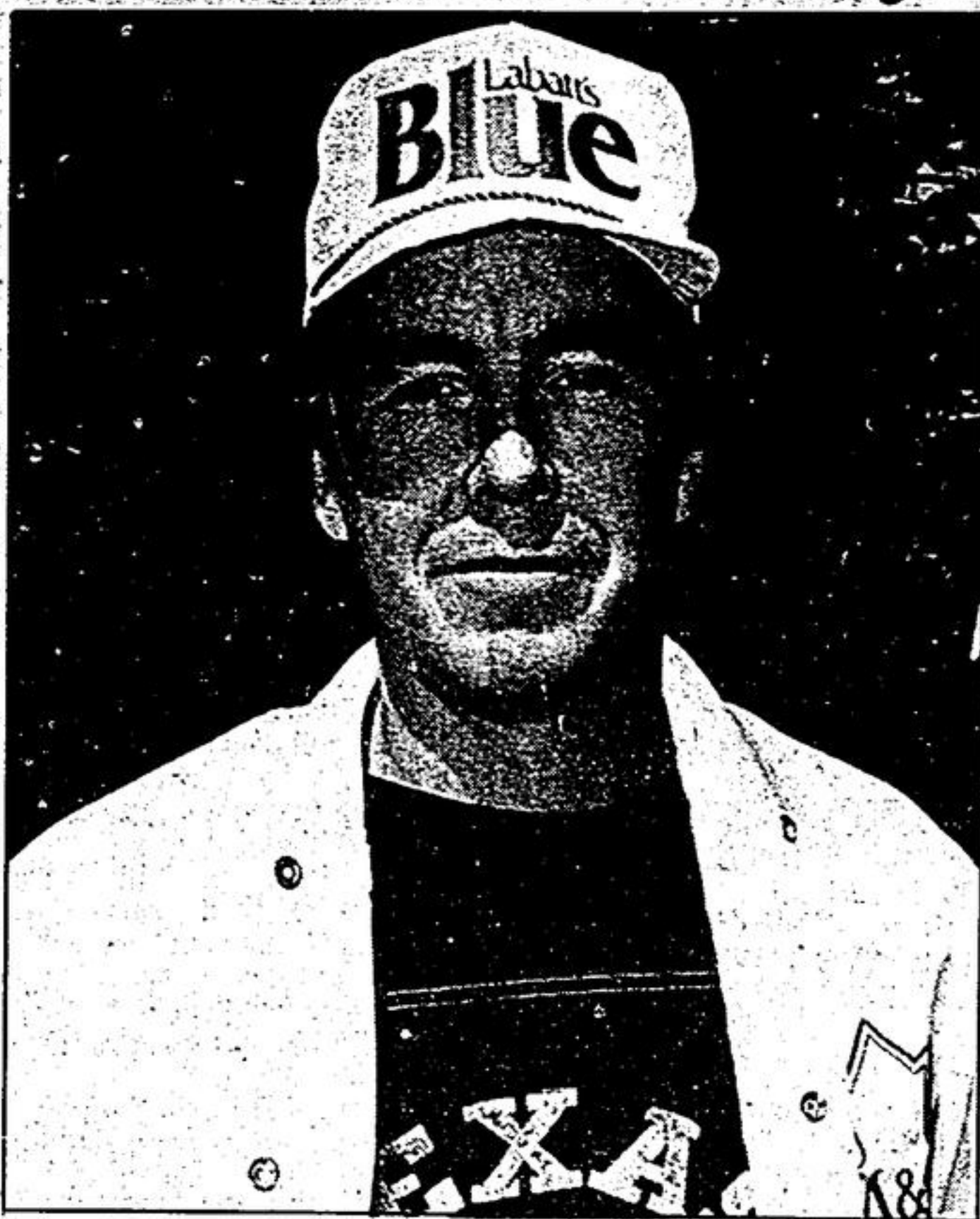


Photo by BRUCE STAPLEY

Paul Murray, known as Mr. Slowpitch around Whitchurch-Stouffville, is preparing for yet another season on the diamond. This year, the slowpitch league in town is set to expand, despite recent declines in other sports' enrolment.

it was great. It's a terrific way to get to know people, especially if you are new in town. The new mixed adults softball league that starts this spring is another good idea. And then there is serious ball like the Betz fastball team."

But Murray's involvement in the town's sporting scene goes beyond adult baseball. For the past seven years, he has coached a Novice-level house league hockey team.

And after being a finalist three times, his McNeil team finally won its league championship this past season. But Murray feels there is much more to it than winning.

"The highlight of coaching the kids, for me, is that you get to teach them the game, to help them understand what they

should be trying to do."

Murray has coached several boys who have gone on to glory in the town's Rep Hockey program. Ryan King starred for this year's Lakeshore division Novice Champion Stouffville Clippers, and Kyle Norton was impressive for the Atom Clippers after a big year with the Novice rep club.

Murray says that while everyone loves to win, there is another aspect of being a part of the town sports scene that is equally important.

"It has a social function as well. And we are respected by out-of-town people who come here to play because of the effort we put out."

As ambassadors go, Paul Murray is a ringer when it comes to promoting sport in Stouffville.



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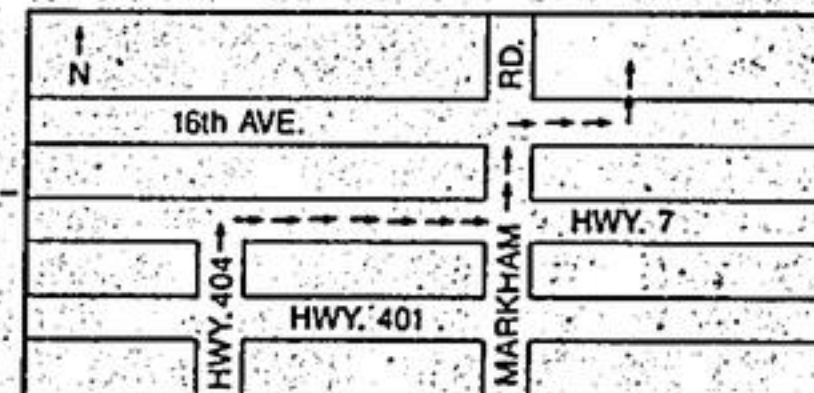
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