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Bantams look to All-Ontarios

By BRUCE STAPLEY

Mike Pongraz's darkest hour has given way to a bright new dawn. The hard-throwing pitcher for the Stouffville Bantam softball team was all set to pack it in three weeks ago when his control abandoned him and his team didn't seem to be heading in the right direction.

But he decided to give it another shot, and it all came together for him at the Town Park last Wednesday night as he fired a three-hitter to lead his club to a 7-2 win over East Gwillimbury.

The win gave Stouffville a two-game sweep in the Provincial Elimination series, qualifying them for the All-Ontario championship tournament in Napanee Aug. 25-27.

"It had been a rough season," admitted Pongraz after the game. "But things are coming together. I started to get my control back. I'm glad it is coming together before the All-Ontario."

The Herb's Upholstering-N.S. Smith (Liz Fraser) Real Estate Bants have been struggling this season, but manager Gary Fraser says his team's recent surge, which has seen the club take its last four games, has put them in the position to challenge for the provincial title.

"The boys are starting to concentrate more. I feel confident about the All-Ontarios. We'll need good hitting and pitching, but none of the

teams are really strong, so it will be a matter of whoever wants to win it most."

The Bantams put Wednesday's game away with a four-run sixth inning.

Bill Pride and Pongraz led off with singles. Eilert Fraser walked and then David Caramanico cashed Pride with a safety.

Kevin Nicholls' sacrifice bunt scored Pongraz, then Fraser and Caramanico scampered home on wild pitched to complete the rally. Stouffville captured the first game of the set by a 10-8 score Tuesday in East Gwillimbury.

Leading 9-2 going into the sixth frame, the Bantams gave up six runs to make it a nervous finish.

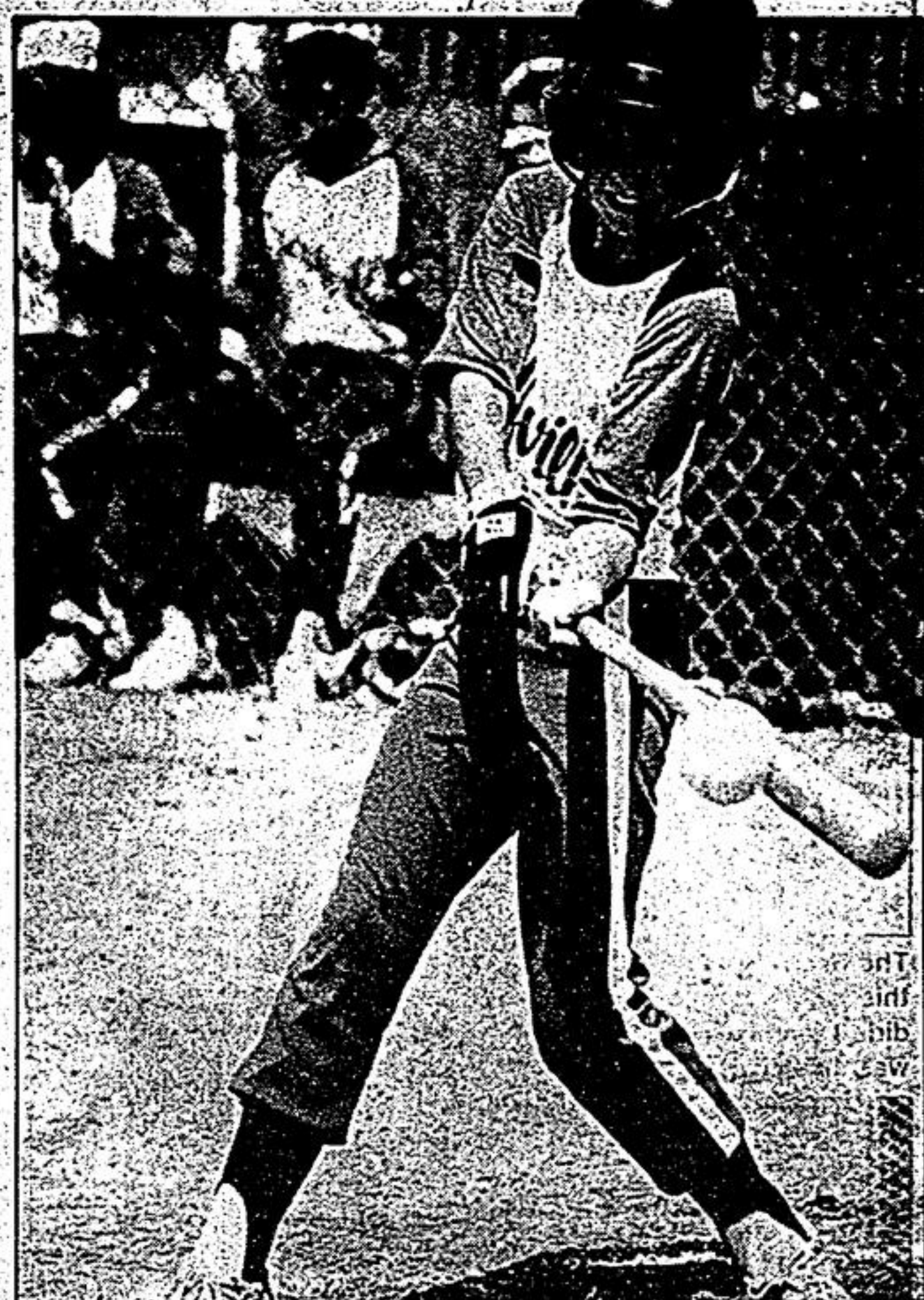
Consecutive triples by Pride and Jason Cowan keyed a five-run first inning to get Stouffville off to a fast start.

Nicholls went three for four, scoring two times, and Matthew McKnight had two RBIs to further the offensive cause.

Caramanico made a strong contribution from his catcher's position, serving to steady pitchers Pongraz and Jodi Infurnari.

The Bantams get back to league action this week, closing out their home schedule with a game against Newmarket tonight, at the Town Park, Diamond Two.

Game time is 8:30 p.m.



Swing!

Batters like this Stouffville Squirt rep player competed for the chance to play in the All-Ontario competitions in St. Catharines next week. Stouffville was eliminated by Unionville in the weekend-long event.

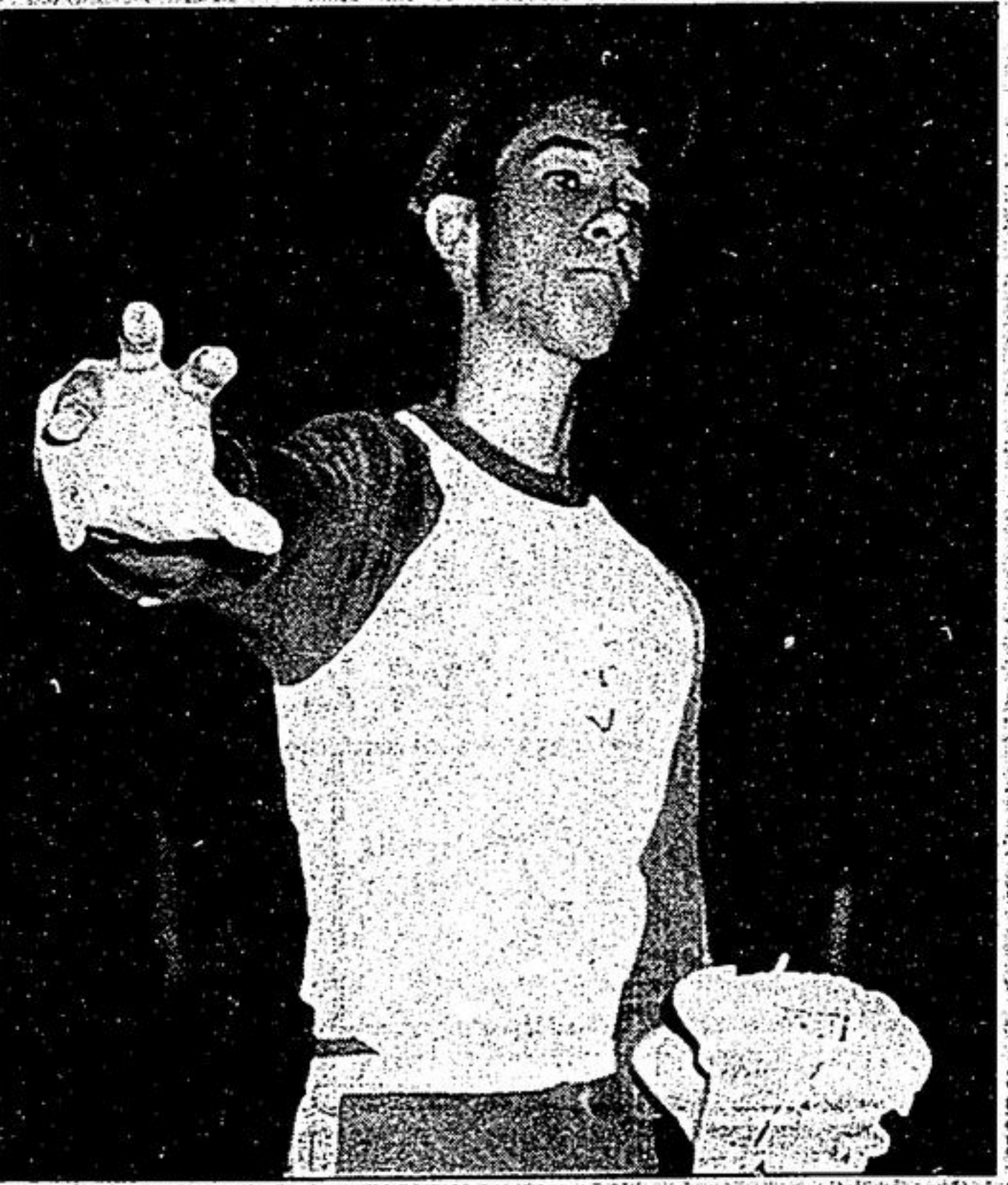


Photo: BRUCE STAPLEY

Bantam Pitcher Mike Pongraz is back in fine form following a slump earlier this season. The Stouffville pitcher hopes to lead his team into the Ontario softball finals later this month.

Stouffville Mites eye Ontario title

The Stouffville Buttermakers Mites face their biggest challenge of the year tonight, as they begin their showdown with Dunnville for the Ontario Mite 'B' softball title.

The little Butters, who have made a joke of their own division this season by continually overwhelming their opponents, earned the right to contest the best two-out-of-three provincial final by burying Unionville in a two-game sweep of the semi-final series in late July.

Stouffville will travel to Dunnville for tonight's opener, with a tentative date of Friday night being planned for the second game at the Town Park.

The sight of the third game, if necessary, is yet to be decided, according to Buttermaker coach Dave Boyd.

The hard-hitting Stouffville crew warmed up for the big series by walloping Port Perry 14-4 last Wednesday night in a league game at the Town Park.

Andrew Harper led the way of

fensively for the Butters, knocking out three hits, good for two runs batted in and a pair of runs scored.

Jeff Hassard clouted two triples, knocked in three runs and crossed the plate twice.

Bobby Lewis and Kevin Hackert each stroked two hits each while scoring twice. Hackert added a pair of RBIs.

Matt Eagen, Brett Boyd, Brad Johnston, and Lewis shone in the field, racking up several impressive catches in support of pitcher Hackert.

Hackert, one of four pitchers who have shone for Stouffville this season, registered a total of 12 strikeouts on his way to the complete game victory.

The Buttermakers have gone undefeated in league play this season and have lost only two games in a tournament competition.

Coach Boyd feels the Dunnville final for the provincial honors will be his team's biggest challenge yet.

Betz still eligible for fastball crown race

By BRUCE STAPLEY

There was good news and bad news for the Betz Pools men's fastball team this past weekend at the Provincial Senior 'B' Elimination tournament in Burlington.

The bad news was that the Stouffville squad lost its first two games giving them an early exit from the competition.

But the good news is that as host team in the All-Ontario Senior 'B' championship tourney September 2 and 3, Betz are automatically included among the teams that will compete for the provincial title.

The Pools Platoon lost the first match to the Oshawa Merchants 4-3 Saturday morning. The games had actually been scheduled for Friday evening, but was called on account of darkness with the score tied 3-3 after five and a half innings.

According to tournament rules, this meant starting the game over again the next day.

Betz went down to defeat 5-0 to Waterloo Saturday evening to send them home winless.

But the Betz boys had better luck in league play last week, edging Port Perry 2-1 Tuesday night in their only league game played.

Doug Webster, Darryl Moxley and John Annis combined on the pitching rubber to limit the home club to a single run.

Gary Grant singled home Steve Schell, who had walked, in the second inning to open the scoring for Betz.

Mark Joslin scored what turned out to be the winning run in the fifth when his single was followed by a booming triple by Gary Vaughan.

Betz will host the Oshawa Juniors at the Town Park at 8:30 p.m. tonight.

After a road game Thursday in Richmond Hill, they will head to Minden for a weekend tournament.

As well as the All-Ontario Senior 'B' tournament, the Labor Day weekend, Betz will host the Oshawa and District League playoff tourney the weekend Aug. 25-26.

Kinsmen follow in Royals' footsteps

Hoping to follow in the footsteps of Martin Johannessen's Stouffville Royals, the Stouffville Kinsmen Select soccer team had their first taste of competition recently.

And if Whitchurch-Stouffville Soccer Association President and Kinsmen assistant coach Bob Tilley has his way, it will be the beginning of a grand tradition.

"We want these to be the new Royals," says Tilley of the under 10 year old selects.

The Royals soccer outfit were brought along by Johannessen from the under 10 level right up to late teens, winning several York Region titles along the way. They disbanded last fall.

Kinsmen head coach Joe Caldeira was pleased with his club's first outing against the Port Perry select team two weeks ago. Stouffville lost 2-1.

"We were quite happy. We had a few chances."

Stouffville's goal was scored by Frank Fisico, after some quick passing by the Kinsmen forward line.

Todd Juriansz on defence, Michael Owen on right wing, and Brian Gillespie at centre received high praise from the Stouffville coaching staff after the game.

"All the players are from our house league," says Caldeira. "If it works out well, then we'll put them in a league next year. We might try to put together a tournament with other York Region select teams later this season."

"We don't expect miracles the first year, though."

The select team concept is a realization of Tilley's pre-season goal to reestablish the select

team concept with the breaking up of the Royals.

"The opportunity was there," says Tilley. "There are nearly 70 kids in the under 10 level in our organization. There were 18-20 kids interested in trying out for the team. We had to have something for the kids to shoot for."

Caldeira, who played soccer in a Scarborough league before moving to Stouffville a year and a half ago, also feels it is important to provide an outlet for the more serious players.

"It's something to work at to get on the team."

Filippo Rumeo, the team's

other assistant coach, is impressed with the desire of the players.

"Some of these kids have got real talent. They really want to play soccer."

Rumeo, a first-year Stouffville resident, coached an under 18 team last year in an Italian soccer league in Toronto.

Tilley feels his game plan for the select team is right on track. "Our objective this year was to pick 20 kids; and put them into a half dozen games or so against other under 10 rep teams in the area. Then, we'll go with an under 11 team next year."

The team includes the sons of all three coaches. Goalie Robbie

Tilley is hoping to benefit from the tutelage of his father, who played goal years ago for the Brighton Boys soccer team in England.

All three coaches are self-professed soccer enthusiasts, and will conduct indoor practices this winter to prepare the team for its first season of league play in 1990.

"We hope this team will be together for a long time," says Tilley.

The Kinsmen lost 2-0 in their second game against Port Perry last Tuesday. Most valuable players for the Kinsmen were Frank Fisico, Daniel Rumeo and Chris Grimes.



Photo: BRUCE STAPLEY

The Under 10 Select soccer team is making a bid to replace the now-defunct Stouffville Royals; the town's top level soccer club. Here, Joe Caldeira (with ball) teaches the finer points of the game to (from left) Daniel Rumeo, Robbie Tilley, Luke Caldeira and Chris Grimes while Filippo Rumeo (far left) and Bob Tilley (centre) look on.

Stingers take two

The Stouffville Stingers Intermediate Ladies' softball team finished out its regular season with two victories last week, although the club didn't have to throw a single pitch to take one of them.

Coming off a 15-1 win over Uxbridge Precision Auto Body in the Durham town Wednesday, the Stingers were to enter their final home game of the season against the Uxbridge team on Thursday night.

But the Stingers were awarded the match when the visitors arrived with just six players.

Wednesday's game saw Stingers pitcher Denise Davies return from her honeymoon to throttle Uxbridge.

Davies had missed several league games plus the provincial eliminations held in Stouffville in July.

Sheila Rockler led the way at

the plate for the George Ross Schell Lumber Stingers, hitting safely in four of five at bats and scoring three runs.

Debbie Gold was three for five, and crossed the plate twice, while Wendy Williams was two for two with three runs scored.

Lisa Arseneault and Garen Abol scored two runs each.

The two wins were enough to keep the Stingers from ending up in second place behind perennial rival Bradford.

The Stouffville women will begin a round robin with Mount Albert and Zephyr at home Thursday night at the Town Park on Diamond Two.

The winner of the round robin will advance to the South Lake Simcoe Ladies League finals.

The Stingers are out to avenge last year's championship series loss to Bradford.

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