

# SPORTS



Photo/ANNETTE BUCHKOWSKI

## Safe at second

Trevor Weir, on the ground, puts his all into making a play at second base, but it was too late as Marion Degroot arrived safely despite being pursued by Greg Fraser. The action took place at Stouffville Memorial Park Sunday as the Toronto East Chapter of the Landscape Ontario Horticultural Trades Association held its annual softball tournament. Weir and Fraser play for the Atlas Landscaping team, while Degroot plays for Degroot Landscaping.

## Junior Merchants ready for shot at Canadian crown

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It's off to Pont Rouge, Quebec Monday for the Stouffville Merchants as they attempt to follow up their Ontario Junior Fastball championship victory with a National title.

The Merchants, who showed unprecedented offensive power in capturing the provincial crown July 8 in Grimsby, should be even stronger for the Canadian showdown, which runs through next Sunday.

In accordance with the rules governing the tournament, the Stouffville based squad has added three pick-up players, chosen from among the best in the province.

The three are Bob Rath, Rich Miaskowski, and Barry Ellerback.

Rath, a 21 year-old shortstop-catcher, was with the North Fredericksburg squad which won last

year's Ontario Junior championship.

Miaskowski, a utility player with a hot bat, is currently playing for the highly regarded York Sundance Men's Fastball team, as well as the Scarborough Juniors.

Barry Ellerback, a 19-year old pitcher, was chosen from the same Invermay Indians Junior club that Merchants' hurler-slugger Scott Evans almost joined this spring. Ellerback and Evans were both pick ups for the St. Catharines team which won the Canadian Midget title last season in Victoria B.C.

Merchants coach Fred Crawford feels the trio will give his team some maturity, as all three played for Canadian title contenders last summer.

"That gives us five players how have played at the national level, as Scott Evans and my son Craig went to Victoria last year. And Ellerback gives us our third top pitcher, to go with Scott and Byron Baraneski. You've got to have three pitchers if you are going to win a national championship."

Crawford hopes his hitters can show the same firepower they unleashed at Grimsby when they get to Quebec.

"The pitching and the hitting all came together at the All-Ontarios. We had five players bat .444 or better. (Scott Evans, .529, John Batten, .519, Tim Evans, .455, Ryan McIntyre, .455, Jason Yoshida .444.)"

Crawford feels his team's success is even more impressive when it is considered that there are 13 first-year juniors on the roster.

"I wanted them to place fifth or better at Grimsby," he said. "But when we knocked off last year's champs from North Fredericksburg in our third game, I felt we could take the whole thing."

Crawford is appealing to the people of Stouffville and Markham to help his team raise the \$20,000 necessary to finance the trip to Quebec. "We'd appreciate any help we can get."

The Merchants took to the field last Wednesday night, nipping the Oshawa Juniors 4-3 in a league contest.

McIntyre's short fly to centre sent Scott Evans scampering home with the winning run in the bottom of the seventh and final inning. Evans had also scored the tying run in the fifth on a triple by Jamie Showers.

Evans and Baraneski primed for the national competition last Thursday, as the two combined to pitch a 2-0 shutout for the Burlington Ambassadors against Richmond Hill in a Senior level game.

"I wanted to get them into a Senior game for a warmup for Quebec," said Crawford.

The Merchants will play two more league games this week before travelling to Quebec Monday.

## Threat of cancer doesn't slow down Carl Myers in bid for fastball title

The fact of the game of baseball, or fastball, being so closely patterned after life itself has been made evident once again this summer in Stouffville.

Baseball, like any other sport, is simply a diversion, a recreational pursuit to help players and fans alike escape the daily routine.

But unlike other sports, the game of ball has always succeeded in going beyond what happens between the white lines. There is a

### Anderson homers pace Mites to win

Ian Anderson socked a pair of home runs, and Carmen Auciello and Jesse Wood starred from the pitching rubber, as the Stouffville Rowntree Mites Buttermakers dumped Port Perry 16-5 at home last Wednesday evening.

Auciello and Wood, who are normally ranked third and fourth in the Mites pitching rotation, were the key to victory, according to team spokesman Irwin Meyer.

"Our secondary pitching really carried the load," said Meyer. "And Ian (Anderson) is really swinging the bat well lately. He's going to be a real power next season."

"The kids are all hitting well, especially the younger ones, since we won our tournament last weekend. The older players carried us earlier in the season. But now the younger kids are coming along as well. We're feeling very optimistic about the OASA (All-Ontario) playoffs later on this month."

"Chad Kerswill, Brett Boyd, and Mattie Eagen are all coming on strong lately."

The Rowntree crew begins their league playoffs tonight against Thornhill. Game time is 6:30 at the Main Diamond.



sport notes

bruce stapley

romantic aspect to the sport, along with what would so often seem to be a mirroring of the very stuff of which our lives consist.

And so the story of the Stouffville Merchant Juniors, and their plucky manager, Carl Myers, has come to dominate the Stouffville sports scene this summer, as a story that combines a team's Cinderella-like performance on the field with one man's determination amid a threatening health crisis.

For just as Carl's collection of starry-eyed teens were stealing the Ontario Junior Fastball championship in Grimsby in early July, he himself was being diagnosed as having cancer in two parts of his body, only one of which has been determined as of yet.

There'll be time spent at Sunnybrook Hospital in the near future, he says, in an attempt to bring the condition under control. He wants so badly to be able to accompany the team to Pont Rouge, Quebec next Monday, where the Merchants will go after the Canadian Junior crown. But he realizes that could be a problem.

Talking to Carl, however, it's business as usual. When I called him last Friday, he acknowledged there are good days and bad days, some discomfort to be sure, but he was trying to be optimistic.

But then it was right down to brass tacks. The team, he implied, was what was worth talking about. "I knew we had the nucleus of a

hell of a team," he led off.

And I immediately recalled him telling me that back in March during an indoor practice in the Whitchurch-Highlands Public School gym. Then, he had said he was working on a three year plan, with the eventual goal of bringing a Junior provincial title to Stouffville in 1992, when the tournament would likely be held here.

But don't count us out for this season, he had added, despite his team's having 13 first-year Juniors on board.

It turns out he wasn't just whistling Dixie.

"These guys have peaked before their time," he acknowledged the other day. "We had the sticks (bats) and we had the pitching. It will get tougher for them next year, because everyone will be gunning for them, and they will have to keep proving themselves."

At the same time, he continued, there will be more out-of-towners wanting to come and get in on the action, quality players looking for a team that's going somewhere.

"This could mean that some of the Stouffville-Markham area players will be dropped from the team, and that's sure to cause problems. But that happens."

Carl has had a few cracks at a national Junior championship in the past, most recently with his Vandorf-based outfit two summers back.

But he's never sipped the victory

champagne.

Talking to Merchants' coach Fred Crawford, along with others associated with the team, it would appear the boys are heading to Quebec with a mission. All agree it's time Carl was rewarded for his tireless efforts throughout the years.

After all, as he also told me back in the gym that rainy March night, he's just trying to give the kids a game.

"Someone's got to do it," he said. "I guess it might as well be me."

And as Carl readies himself to go a few tough months, he'll have his fastball team right there to give him some much appreciated diversion as they go after the Canadian title, then the Provincial A championship later on this summer, followed by their league playoffs.

### Squirts win

The Choko Design Squirt softball team proved to be less than hospitable hosts last Tuesday night, sending their Port Perry visitors packing with a 22-1 shellacking.

Pitcher Paul Koert dominated the game for Stouffville, striking out 16 Port Perry batters in seven innings, including eight in a row at one point.

Koert was also five-for-five at the plate, with three singles, a double, and a home run, good for six RBIs.

Billy Wray reached base on four occasions, scoring each time. Dan Tardella was on base six times, scoring three runs. The Choko leadoff spot, shared by catchers Evan Body, Robbie Spytz, accounted for five runs.

Choko will contest their league title in Thornhill the weekend of Aug. 10 to 19.