

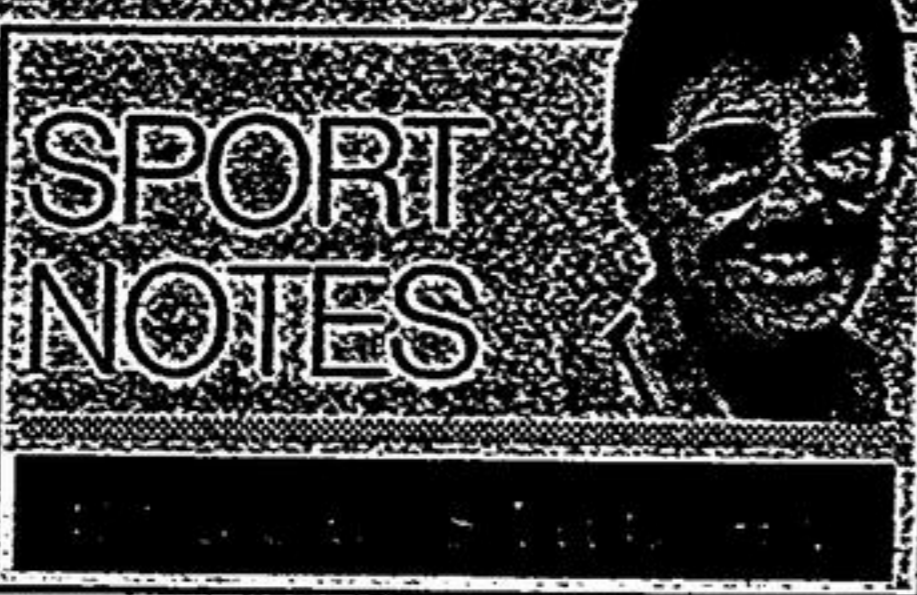
# By now, the Merchants are in the midst of battle...

By the time you sit down to read this offering, the Stouffville Merchants will probably be on the field engaging the host team in a serious game of fastball at the Canadian Junior Men's championships at St. John's Newfoundland.

The boys were scheduled to take on the Newfoundland squad at 8:30 p.m. our time tonight. Of course, the weather being as it is on 'The Rock', there's no guarantee what kind of conditions the team is being forced to endure. After all, they did have a serious snow storm in that province back in June!

The game is the second for our guys, who were to play Quebec yesterday afternoon.

The biggie, of course, the one they've all been waiting for, happens Wednesday night at 10:30. That's when the Merchants square



off against Saskatchewan, the squad expected to provide the stiffest competition of the week long tournament.

It's also when the Stouffville crew gets to go toe-to-toe with ex-teammate Scott Evan, who went west this season. A classic reunion to be sure, the kind of stuff of which movies are made.

But then again, the Merchants have provided the type of high drama, along with the tragedy, that make for the sort of flick Kevin Cosmer loves to wrap his considerable talents around.

In sport, as in life, players don't

always get a second chance. But the Merchants were able to buck the odds and repeat provincial champs this summer. Which will allow them an opportunity to erase the memory of a pair of 1-0 losses which sent them home fourth place finishers in last year's national show down in Port Rouge, Quebec.

The first heart-breaking defeat saw pitcher Barry Ellerbeck, a tournament recruit from the Kingston area, throw a 12-inning no-hitter, only to lose 1-0 to Newfoundland on an error and a wild pitch.

The loss to Newfoundland in the round robin contest put the Merchants in the position of not being able to lose one game in the play-off round.

Ellerbeck threw back-to-back wins as the championship set began. But in the semifinal

against, you guessed it, Saskatchewan, the Merchants Byron Baraneski gave up two doubles in the fifth inning, resulting in the game's only run.

Saskatchewan went on to finish second to Alberta in the medals.

Both Ellerbeck and Baraneski are back this year, with both young men determined to see the story have a happy ending this time around.

Sure, in this type of mega-pressure competition, determination alone won't always do it. You need a break or two when runs are as scarce as heat waves in August in Newfoundland.

The Merchants only gave up eight runs in their seven tournament games, yet all that got them was also ran status.

And as with the big leagues of baseball, fastball is governed to a great extent by the whim and fancy of the gods. As the Blue Jays have learned on more than one occasion, sometimes it's just not in the cards.

But one of the hokey expressions that holds the most truth in ball is that what comes around goes around. The breaks do tend to even out in time. And our Stouffville Merchants would seem to be due for a break, or two, in this week's national junior classic.

The boys are a year older, with the added seasoning and savvy that go with an extra season logged against the same level of competition.

The Merchants take to the field against an Alberta outfit (not the defending champs) Thursday, before closing out the preliminary

round with a match-up versus Nova Scotia Friday.

Then, providing they are in the top four in their six-team division, it's on to the championship round.

And you can be sure if Byron Barry and the boys should put it all together and emerge victorious, last year's disappointment will vanish like the leaves of autumn.

## SAHL adds two teams to lineup

The Stouffville Amateur Hockey League (SAHL) has added two teams to its lineup for the upcoming season.

The Rand Pools Maple Leafs and the Occasions Catering Blues have been included in the league's 40-and-over division for the 1991-92 season.

There are now eight teams in the over-40 flight, with six squads remaining in the over-30 group.

The loop has also brought in a rule requiring all players to wear eye protective equipment.

The SAHL schedule begins on Sunday, Sept. 8. All games are played at the Rec Centre and run from 6 a.m. through 1 p.m. Sunday mornings.

This season's playoff championship matches are scheduled for April 12.

## Pony club ends season with narrow win

The Uxbridge-Scugog Pony Club closed out the season with a flair, edging their closest competitor by one point in a tie breaker to take the B division of the Prince Philip Games meet at Port Perry's Greystone Farms recently.

The narrow victory gave the Uxbridge-Scugog club the season championship for the five-meet series with a total of 162 points, 22 ahead of the second place Saddlewood Farms (Cavan) team.

The Uxbridge-Scugog team includes Cindy Markell, Patricia and Danielle Donnelly, Wendy Bems and Rebecca Sterritt.

The Durham Pony Club team of BJ Reid, Ammie Reid, Lisa Reid and Tenille Matthews, was third on the day, just two points back of the leaders, and fourth for the season.

The Eglinton Pony Club entry was fourth at the Port Perry meet, but finished the season in third spot.

In the C flight, it was the Eglinton Pony Club quartet of Jennifer Hoenie, Amanda McIninch, Ashlee Burness and Marissa Stapley riding to victory Sunday.

The Eglinton team ended up with a total of 23 points, two points ahead of runner-up Saddlewood,

and five more than the third place Uxbridge-Scugog/Durham mixed team, made up of Beth Murray, Amanda Heron and Laura Beaton.

The Eglinton team, which missed the first two meets of the season, won two and came second in the three meets it attended.

Saddlewood finished on top for the season in the C class, with the Uxbridge-Scugog/Durham team second, and Eglinton third.

In the A class, the Eglinton unit came third for the meet, finishing the season in second spot behind Tynedale.



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