

Sports

Merchants favored to win it all

Ontario wins first four games at national mens' fastball championship

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After their first four games at the Canadian Junior Men's Fastball Championships in St. John's Newfoundland, the Stouffville Merchants are as perfect as the weather that has graced the week long competition.

And according to team coach Howard Burkholder, the Ontario representative Merchants are the fans' favorite to take it all in this weekend's playoff round.

The Merchants, led by Bracebridge recruit Todd Martin, have compiled four straight wins in opening round robin play, including a 2-1 victory Wednesday over the favored Saskatoon Magic team for which former-Merchant Scott Evans plays.

Martin pitched a two-hit, mercy-shortened 7-0 shutout against Quebec in the Merchants' opener Monday, backing up his hurling efforts with three doubles and a trio of runs batted in.

He followed that with a brilliant rescue of Wednesday's contest against Saskatoon, pitching the final two innings to save the win for starter Barry Ellerbeck, the Rideau Valley pick up.

Martin then chucked a no hitter in the Merchants' 7-0 mercy win over Alberta Thursday, striking out 11 batters in the five-inning match. The performance gained him his third player of the game nomination in four days.

Chris Burkholder received the player-of-the-game nod Tuesday, backing up the pitching of starter Byron Baranieski and reliever Ellerbeck with a three-hit, three-RBI effort in a 5-3 win over the host St. John's Junior 50s.

The Merchants' third recruit, infielder Ron White of Sebringville, slugged a two-run homer as well.

Craig Crawford belted a triple in the Saskatoon match up, with Steve Cooper collecting the game winning RBI.

The Stouffville squad subdued Alberta with a six-run second inning.

The Merchants were to close out the preliminary round with a game against undefeated Nova

Scotia Friday morning before beginning the elimination round the same night, probably versus British Columbia.

But no matter what the outcome of the Nova Scotia contest, the Merchants guaranteed themselves preferred status in the championship round with their four wins earlier in the week.

"We'll finish either first or sec-

ond-in our pool, and that means we get a double life in the finals," coach Burkholder told the Tribune from his St. John's hotel Thursday, referring to the fact the Merchants could lose a game in the medal round and still survive.

The top four teams in each pool advance to the playoff round, with the first and second place finishers in each flight assured of dou-

ble life status. The other squads can only lose one game.

The championship game is scheduled for Sunday afternoon.

Burkholder, who reported the weather conditions in St. John's are the best in years, said the win over Saskatoon was the key so far.

"That was the big one. It was a pretty emotional game, and there

was a fair amount of feeling there."

Burkholder said the word around the tournament is that the Merchants have the best pitching and thus are favored to emerge on top. While admitting he likes his team's chances, the coach isn't making any predictions.

"I'm optimistic. But we've got some tough games ahead."



Photo/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Breakaway

Shawn Burns, of the Remax Imperial team, breaks for home as Crystal Lapp of Action Sign Erection Services tries to decide whether to pursue him or just throw to home in Whitchurch-Stouffville house league softball action at Stouffville Memorial Park Tuesday.

Uxbridge wins first place at Indians' tourney

Stouffville's Pee Wee Indians hosted an eight-team tournament last weekend for the Ontario Championship Division qualifier. The first-year squad battled and braved teams from areas like Keswick, Woodbridge, Uxbridge and Vaughan to make it through to second place.

The extra-inning final game score opposite Uxbridge was 8-3 which edged out Stouffville from a first place victory.

Competition Stouffville had to face before entering the finals was Keswick, yet Stouffville captured the victory 9-6. Hot hitters throughout the weekend were Doug Frew and Craig Wood packing up singles, doubles and a homer. Jeff Hassard and Pat Curley shared pitching duties and some great key plays were made by second basemen Chris Johnson.

This rookie team in its first year has had a fantastic season with nine wins, one tie and seven losses, four of which were only by one run.

Next weekend the Indians gear up to play in the York Simcoe Championships.

Pee Wees win two against East Gwillimbury

Stouffville's Dean Myers Pee Wees won their OASA qualifying series against East Gwillimbury last weekend, two games to none. The large victory of 12-3 in game one of the tourney was contributed by Shawn Sargeant and Mike Underwood. Shawn smacked in a double with bases loaded scoring all run-

ners and Mike snowed some hot hitting and great pitching recording 13 strikeouts only allowing three runs.

In game two, the team's victory was 17-10 in Stouffville's favor scoring two runs in each second inning, four in the third and six in

the fourth. Paul Koert and Mike Underwood shared pitching efforts while Graham Crowder chipped in some base hits, finishing off their season. The Stouffville Pee Wees will play the next two weekends in their league playoffs at Thornhill and the OASA Tournament in Owen Sound.

SCORE BOARD

WHITCHURCH STOUFFVILLE SOFTBALL STANDINGS AUG. 8			
TEAM	W	L	PTS
Centre Court	6	0	13
Action Sign	4	1	9
Roy Kerswill	4	1	9
Giles	4	0	8
Boyd's Sports	4	0	8
Bennett Auction	3	4	7
Remax	3	3	6
Stomark Rental	2	3	5
Gdwd Boyd Spis	2	3	5
Frank's Pizza	2	6	4
Ram Forest Prds	0	4	0

MITE BOYS			
Cobra Metal	4	7	1
Randy's Refrig	3	7	0
Silver Shadow	10	1	0
Shiva Co op	9	1	0
Microfilm	9	3	0
Gdwd Village Gas	9	1	0
Shiva Rental	5	6	0
Claramont Lions	5	6	0
Lay-All	4	6	0
Flash N Chip	3	6	0
Choke	2	8	0
Tri-Can	3	9	0
Newtonbrook	1	10	0

SQUIRT GIRLS			
Angle's Eatery	8	1	17
Progress Club	2	2	2
Camill Contract	2	4	1
Gdwd Gardens	1	6	0

SQUIRT BOYS			
Gavin Law	11	1	22
John Doner	9	1	18
Louis Brown	7	4	15
All Quip	4	5	2
Robert Bruce	4	4	10
Kinamen	4	7	0
FPL Aggregate	3	6	0
Clark's Critics	2	3	0
Giles	0	5	2
Triple Play	0	10	1

BANTAM GIRLS			
Free Lane	6	2	13
Plasti Glass	5	3	10
Angle's Eatery	4	4	9
Ken's Demo	1	7	2

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