

Sports

Morton follows his father's race tracks

Those of us who regularly attended the super modified stock car races down at the old Exhibition Stadium oval or at Pinecrest in the late 1950's and early '60's might recall the late Norm Morton.

Norm, who drove car number 70, has passed the torch to his son Gary, a 41 year old Stouffville father of two who has been driving the International Super Modified Association circuit for the past 10 years.

Gary is quick to point out that the Stouffville area is a hot bed of race car activity. He told me during a recent interview that several Stouffville area drivers are regulars on the Southern Ontario late model or stock car class scene, racing at such places as the Peterboro Speedway, Mosport, and the Sunset Speedway in Stroud. Goodwood's Peter Gibbons has been doing the NASCAR circuit in the United States for several years.

The Goodwood Go Kart Centre has served as a training ground for no less than three big names on the Indy circuit - Scott Goodyear, Ludwig Heimrath, and Paul Tracy. Indy followers will be aware that Tracy was victorious in the recent Cleveland Grand Prix and Toronto Molson Indy.

As for Morton, his fate at the July 11, 50-lap special super modified feature at the Mosport oval track, which was on the same bill as the Goodyear Chal-

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bruce stapley

lenge Cup event, was typical of his season so far. He started strong, moving up from 12th to first place, before tire troubles caused him to slip to a fourth place finish.

Gary, who drives an oversize yellow sprint car emblazoned with his dad's old number 70, has been kept out of the winner's circle by similar minor problems all year. There have been various third and fourth place showings, however, as he always manages to stay in the thick of things.

And fortunately, the snags have all been minor in nature. To this point, he's been spared the expense of a major motor overhaul, or, even worse, a serious crash. In a sport where you hope to simply break even, this is a blessing. Lucrative sponsorships are next to non-existent in Canada - Gary does have a dozen or so minor sponsors - with the big American sponsors reluctant to put their money on foreign drivers.

But while this year has been trying for him, Gary has achieved victories through the years running races anywhere from the U.S. midwest to New

England. He also ran a series of smaller races in Florida this February. The recent Mosport race was, in fact, the only race he will enter in his native country all season.

Gary is hoping his bad luck is behind him, as the major races of the year still lie ahead. He plans to run a 50-lap event at the Oswego Speedway near Syracuse, N.Y. today. This should serve as a good warmup for a 150-lap feature race next weekend in Sanduskey, Ohio.

Then it's back to Oswego for a 200-lap biggie on the Labor Day weekend. He will contest another 200-lap event in New Hampshire the weekend after that.

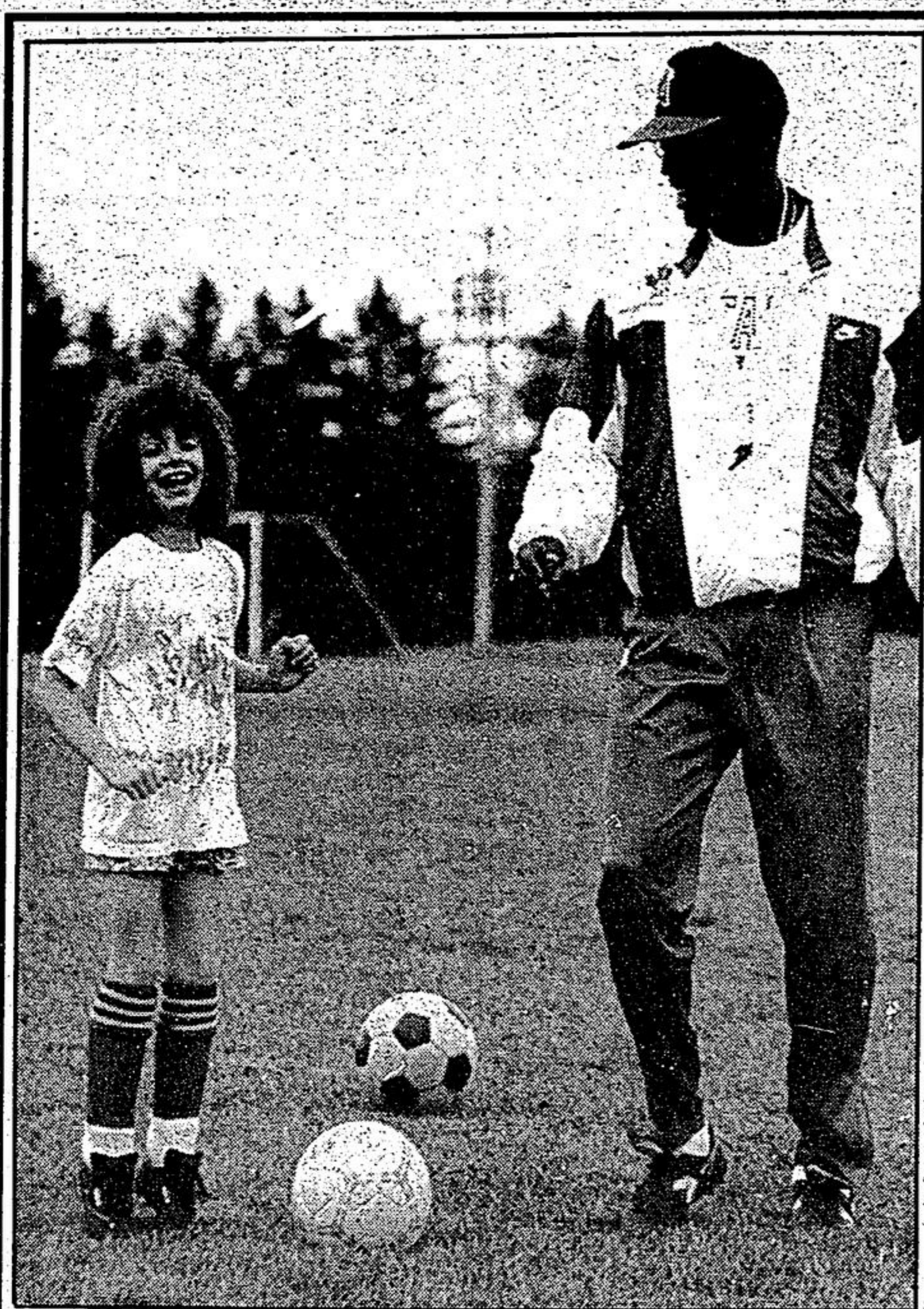
After that, it's off to Pittsburg, New Jersey, and Charlotte, N.C. for three more marathon outings:

Luckily for Gary, he is free to travel in the summer months, as his self-owned heating business is a winter-intensive operation.

He has a team of five volunteers who make up his pit crew, and the drivers on the circuit have succeeded in keeping expenses down while lobbying to have prize purses increased.

He has also been fortunate in that he has stayed relatively injury free throughout his racing career.

His only injury that came close to being serious? It was at the Goodwood Go-Kart track back in 1981.



Photo/STEVE SOMERVILLE

Kicking up a storm

Kristen Hoeller (left), is all smiles as she learns a relaxation technique while addressing the ball from York Region Kick player Anton Skerritt (right), at a summer soccer camp held recently for youths at the Rec Centre fields.

Legion mites rule the diamond with five straight wins

The Stouffville Legion/Buttermakers mite rep softball team has put together a five-game win string.

The mites downed Richmond Hill and Newmarket twice each, while also defeating Pickering, in recent contests.

The Stouffville squad got outstanding pitching from Scott McDougall, Rod Assinck, Shane Timms, Dale Boadway, Jamie Wood, and Brandon Tardella throughout the five matches.

The team also used its aggressive baserunning to advantage, while home runs came off the bats of Assinck, McDougall, Corey Rice, Geoff Laird, and Jon Ferguson.

Adam Howe, Andy Paule and Robert Anderson each contributed three base hits.

The mites' season is now drawing to a close, with just two league games remaining.

The team will also participate in the year-ending league tournament, and has a bye to the Ontario Amateur Softball Association provincial championships in September.

Houseleague tournament is ready to play some ball

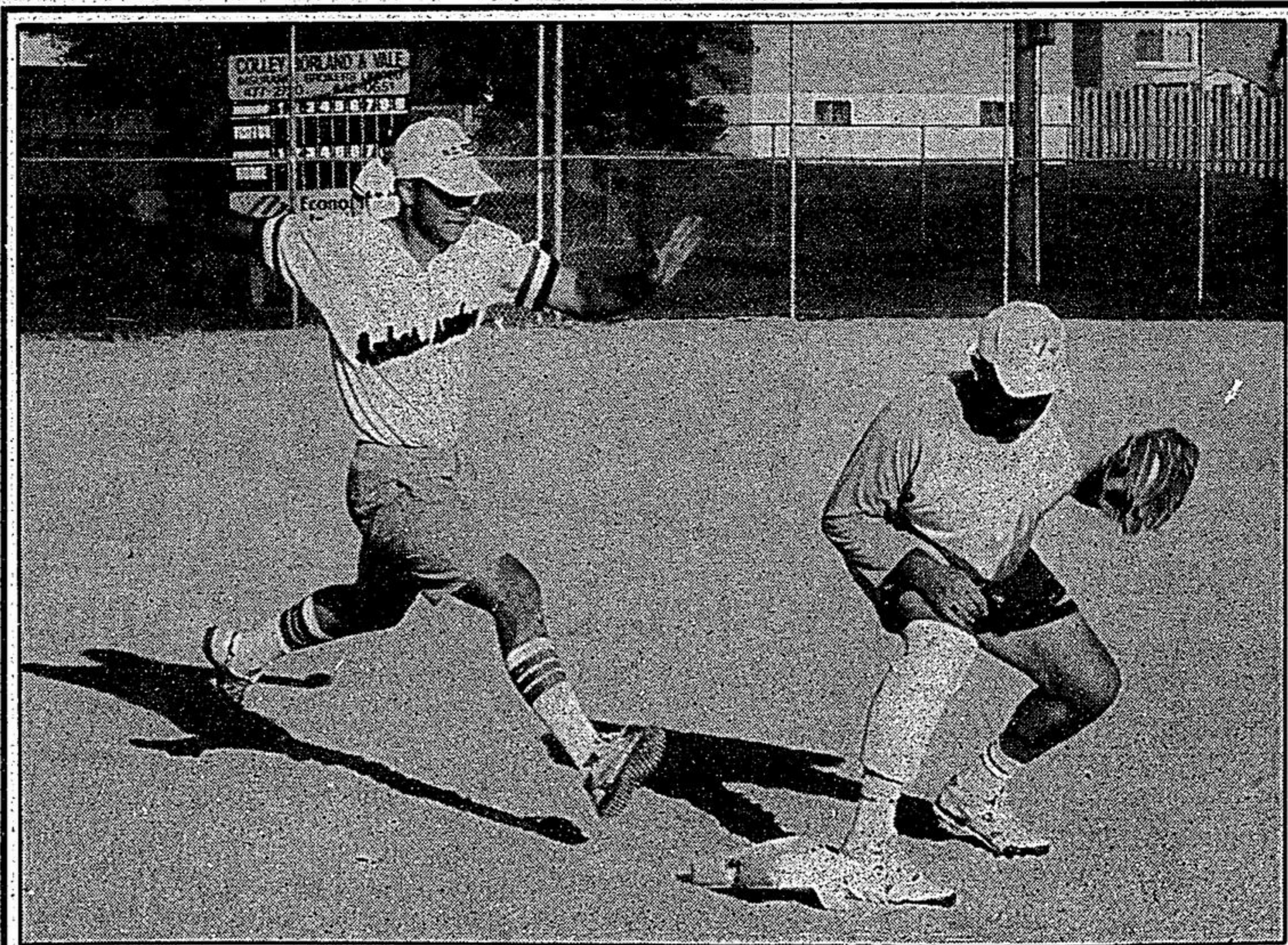
Four Stouffville teams are taking part in three houseleague select softball tournaments being played in town this weekend.

A mite and squirt select tournament was to begin this morning at the town park, with both competitions to be completed this evening.

A peewee select tournament is set for Sunday at the park, with the final to be played in mid-afternoon.

The Stouffville mite and squirt teams were to play their first games today at 8:30 a.m., with their second contests set for 3 p.m. on diamonds three and one respectively.

The two Stouffville peewee select teams will kick off Sunday's tournament at 8:30 a.m. on diamonds one and two.



Photo/LORI EMMERSON

A late arrival

Kitchener Ambassadors base runner Collin Schiedel (left) could have used a bit more foot-speed at first base as Lakeridge Links' first baseman Les Cracknell catches this relay

throw to put out Schiedel during action in the recent York Christian Sports Fellowship Slo-Pitch Tournament at the Memorial Park ball diamond.