

Sports

Joseph is a thief in more than one sport

SPORT NOTES



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While the Blue Jays World Series victory last fall brought with it the type of nail biting excitement that caused loyal fans in these parts to neglect the normal routine for days on end, the Maple Leafs sudden ascent to hockey's high rent district has the potential to cause even greater local interest. After all, hockey is still the Canadian game.

Perhaps the biggest difference between how the fans view the two games lies in the perception of "the enemy." For Jays fans, there's a built in aversion to the likes of Oakland A's stars Dennis Eckersley and Rickey Henderson. For we here in the frozen north simply can't relate in any way to these athletes from south of the border. They might as well be inhabitants of an alien planet.

But when the enemy is St. Louis Blues thief-like goaltender Curtis Joseph, it's a whole different story. Especially when you are a small town sports correspondent who, less than five years ago, cheered lustily when the same man who has shrunk the St. Louis net against the Leafs helped lift the Whitchurch-Stouffville Vandorf juniors to the Ontario Amateur Softball Association (OASA) Junior 'A' championships.

And no one remembers the talented yet sportsmanlike Joseph better than Mary Myers, wife of the late Carl Myers, coach of the '88 provincial champs. I called Mary the other day, hoping she might have a vague recollection of the team's shortstop who called Newmarket home in those days.

Not only did Mary remember the netminder they now refer to as Cujo, but she had nothing but praise for him as a 20-year-old ball player. "There was just nothing bad to say about him," Mary told me. "He was a super kid, an all around nice kid, and a perfect gentleman on and off the field. He never showed any anger, no matter how bad things might have been going on the field. He always came to the park to play ball, and he was well liked."

She compared him to Byron Baranieski, the talented and likeable kid, also from the Newmarket area, who pitched the Stouffville Merchants to two consecutive provincial junior men's fastball crowns in 1991-92. Baranieski also pitches for the Markham Mennos, rivals of the Uxbridge Bandits intermediate team of the North Durham Men's Fastball league.

Mary marvelled at the fact that, unlike some young men possessed of incredible talent, Joseph was never cocky. "He didn't have a big head, even though he had a right to be a little high on himself." He was also a private individual, she recalled, and it took a little while to get to know him.

Mary recalls that Joseph was late in joining the ball team in the spring of 1988, his one and only season with the squad. It seems he was tending goal for an Ontario team in the Centennial Cup Tier 2 Junior A hockey championships in Calgary. Neither Mary, nor the people I talked with in the Ontario Hockey League (OHL) offices could recall just who he played for, but Mary is quite sure his team won it all.

OHL Information Officer Jim Price says Joseph never played Junior A hockey, heading off to play with the University of Wisconsin hockey team for the '88-89 season.

Anyway, Mary said that when Joseph finally took off the pads and slipped on his ball glove back in the spring of '88, it was well worth the wait. He was a vacuum cleaner out there at shortstop, and he hit the ball with authority as well. He played a vital role in the team's provincial title victory, which was forged when the winners were forced to down Sarnia twice in a row to capture the crown at the Oshawa showdown played the weekend of August 26-28 that year. It should be pointed out that Joseph's team had lost an extra inning heartbreaker to Sarnia that same morning. Leaf fans could well hope that's not an omen.

Five years later, Mary admits to being more than a little divided in her loyalties to the Maple Leafs and the unbeatable goalie she came to see as one of her own. "I'm kind of torn. I'm a Leaf fan, but Curtis is one of my boys."



Photos/LORI EMMERSON

Safe or out?

Aspiring umpires and young ballplayers converged at Latcham Hall last weekend to attend an Umpire Clinic. Here, Softball Canada instructor Bob French (right) discusses the universal language of softball hand signals to those on hand.

Lawn bowling club will conduct membership drive

The Stouffville Lawn Bowling Club is looking to double its membership this season.

The club, which is located at the south end of Church St. in Stouffville, dates back as far as the early 1900's.

"There are currently 40 members on the club roster, but officials are hoping to convince people who have never played the game to come out."

"Some people think lawn bowling is a game for older folks," said club treasurer Doris Farthing. "Certainly, it's a sport you can

enjoy for many years, but our club has members in their 20's and 80's and everything in between."

Madge Pearson, the club's publicity person, said the club is looking to attract more young people.

"We want to stress that it's a sport that could appeal to young people," said Pearson.

"In fact, some local high school students are booked to come and try it during the summer months."

The club is to hold a Monday-Thursday open house in late May once the green is ready.

The actual date is yet to be determined because of the extent of winterkill suffered by the grass this year.

Yearly membership to the club, which plays Monday and Thursday evenings, costs \$40 per person.

The club will host the men's doubles provincial playdowns for the district June 19. There will also be an invitational mixed trebles tournament June 30 as part of the Strawberry Festival.

The club is to hold its annual meeting May 18 at 7 p.m. at the clubhouse.

Betz Clippers finalists in final tournament of season

The Betz Pools Oldtimers hockey team put the cap on one of their most successful seasons when they ended up as finalists in the 15th annual Scarborough Burros tournament played recently.

It was the fifth time this season the Clippers had made it as far as the championship game at a tournament.

In tournaments at Huntsville and Bedwell, the

Stouffville squad won both events.

The Clippers, in their 12th year together, also hosted a 16-team tournament last October, with \$500 of the proceeds going to the Children's Wish Foundation in memory of the late Dan McNeil.

The team was coached by Al Hachey and John "Rocket" Boyd, with long time sponsor Betz Pools once again backing the squad.

Minor hockey meeting on May 19

The Whitchurch-Stouffville Minor Hockey Association (WSMHA) will put the cap on a successful season when it holds its annual meeting May 19 at the Rec Centre Lounge.

The meeting will begin at 7:30

p.m. "I would expect it will be a fairly quiet meeting because this is a non-election year," said WSMHA president Wally Crowder.

Crowder also expressed his

appreciation to those who helped make the 1992-93 WSMHA season a success.

"We really want to thank everyone who helped out this year. That's how minor hockey works."