

# Buttcon midgets eliminated in provincial semis

The Buttcon Ltd. midget boys fastball team went all the way to the semi finals at the Ontario Amateur Softball Association Midget B championships held in Napanee last weekend.

The Buttcon bunch posted two wins against a pair of losses at the competition, with both defeats coming at the hands of the finalist squads.

Stouffville got off on the wrong foot in a 10-0 opening game loss to the host team.

But the Buttcon outfit bounced back to down East Gwillimbury 16-6 in a game which helped erase the memories of East Gwillimbury's victory over Stouffville in a tournament held here in town earlier this summer.

Jeff Taber socked a home run for Stouffville. Tom Hammond banged two triples, Rino Dambrosio had a three

bagger, and Paul Doner and Jay Hoover each had a double. Mike Underwood looked after the pitching, helping his cause by banging a triple.

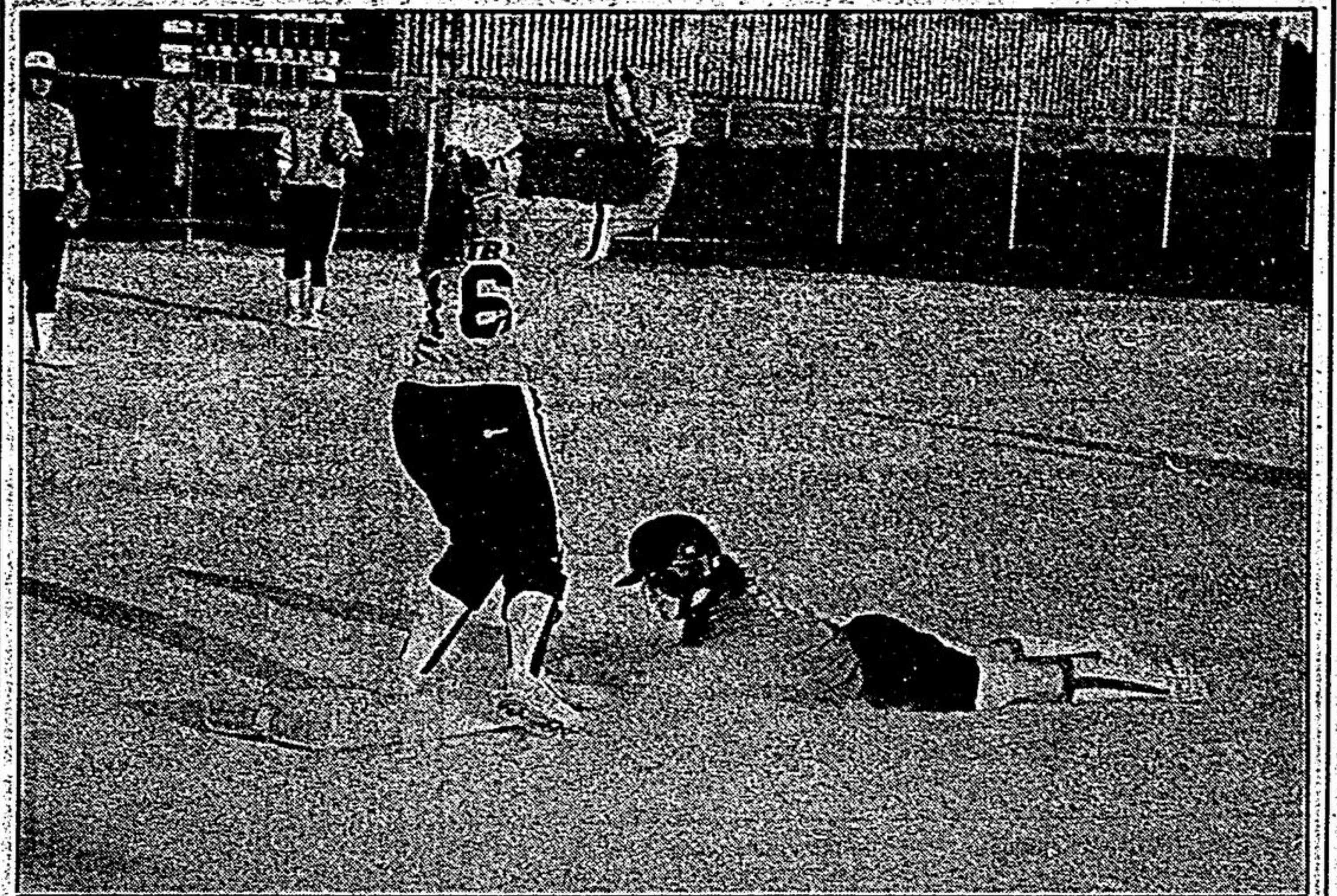
Stouffville carried the momentum into the next morning when they defeated Owen Sound 8-3 behind the pitching of Brad Crozier.

Hammond tripled while Hoover socked another double.

But Stouffville couldn't hold onto a 5-2 lead against the eventual champions from Simcoe, who plated the winning run in the seventh inning to take a 6-5 win, eliminating the Stouffville crew. Underwood hurled a five hitter in a losing cause. Dambrosio tripled, with Hoover getting a double.

The midgets were to contest their league playoff tournament this weekend in Oshawa.

## Sports



### Returning to safe grounds

Stouffville baserunner Sherry Harnett (right), makes a safe return to first base in an attempted pick off move during action in

Tuesday's novice girls' tier one rep softball game against Whitby at the Town Park diamond.

PHOTO/LORI EMMERSON

# Merchants finish third at provincial A championships

Call it another near miss for the Stouffville Merchants junior mens fastball team.

The Merchants, who have made a habit of finishing just out of the money since winning back to back All-Ontario titles in 1990 and '91, placed a surprising third at the Ontario Amateur Softball Association Provincial A Championships at Smith's Falls last weekend.

The Stouffville outfit, with ace pitcher Byron Baranieski limited to spot duty due to an ailing shoulder, won four of six games to reach the semi finals.

The Merchants may have found an heir apparent in the process. Fifteen-year-old lefthander Paul Koert, who plays with the

town's bantam rep team, won two games for the Merchants, who wound up with a 4-2 win-loss mark.

In the end, the Merchants were grounded by the Oshawa BB Juniors, former rivals in the Oshawa City and District Fastball League. Both Merchants' losses were at the hands of Oshawa.

After Koert pitched the Stouffville crew to a tournament opening 6-4 victory over Garson (near Sudbury), the Merchants were edged 7-6 in nine innings by Oshawa.

Craig Smith, an Ottawa area resident signed by the Merchants this season, pitched the team to a 6-3 win over Garson in another nine-inning

marathon in game three. Koert relieved Smith, who had started the game, to pick up his second win of the weekend. The Merchants won it on a sacrifice fly by Baranieski, followed by a two run double by Jason Underwood. Stouffville's Keith Piette ripped a pair of triples in the game.

On Sunday, Koert and Baranieski combined on the pitching rubber in a 5-2 triumph over North Fredericksburg. Bill Pride socked a home run for the Merchants. Ryan Burkholder had a triple and a single, while Bob Ferguson contributed to the offence as well.

The Merchants then rode the solid pitching of Smith to a 5-1 win over Smith's Falls in the quarter finals. Chris Burkholder was the hitting hero for Stouffville with four hits, including a homer, in four at bats. Smith helped his own cause with a pair of safeties.

But the Merchants were ousted in the semi finals when they lost their second game of the tournament to Oshawa, 10-6. Chris Burkholder and Baranieski, both in their final provincial competitions as juniors, finished with a flourish. Burkholder homered in his last at bat in the Oshawa game, while Baranieski had two hits in two plate appearances.

Darren Crawford also socked a round tripper for the Merchants in the contest. Ferguson hit well throughout the tournament.

The Merchants returned to Davisville Fastball League play by splitting a pair of games earlier this week. They were edged 1-0 by the host Toronto Sammy's on Tuesday, then came home to blast the Leaside McSorley's 8-3 at the town park on Wednesday.

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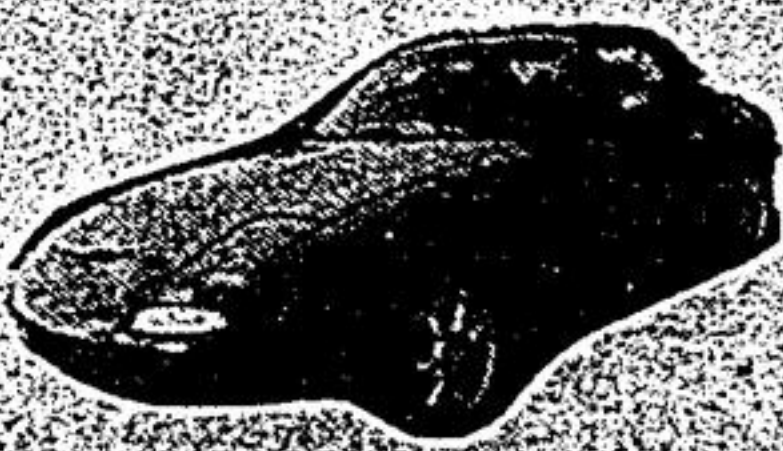
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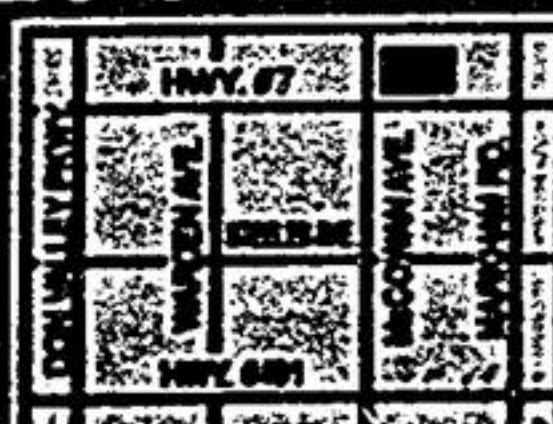
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