

Rebels off to fast start in men's fastball action

BY BRUCE STAPLEY
Correspondent

The Claremont Rebels are high on aces as they kick off the 2000 Oshawa City and District Men's Fastball League season.

The star-studded Rebels jumped out to a record of three wins and a tie in their first four league games with a roster bolstered by an abundance of players who have established themselves at the International Softball Congress level in past years.

Leading the parade is Chris Jones, who will anchor the Rebels' infield when he's not tending to his duties as shortstop with the Canadian Senior Men's National Team, which will compete at the World Championships in South Africa from July 7 to 15.

"Chris will be playing with us whenever he can get here," said Sylvia Ryan, Rebels veteran manager.

The Rebels can count on the services of Rob Watson on a full-time basis this season. The Claremont resident has agreed to return to the Rebels after spending last season playing with the highly touted Oshawa Gators ISC club.

Before leaving the team last season, the hard-hitting infielder split his playing time between the Rebels and an assortment of highly ranked ISC teams on both sides of the border over the past five seasons. His brother, Tom Watson, another longtime Rebel who has also gone the ISC route in recent years, will play with the team on weekdays while suiting up with his Pennsylvania ISC team for weekend tournament play.

Terry Challis, another member of the 1999 Gators roster, has joined the Rebels this season.

Also back with the Rebels is hard-throwing

right-handed pitcher Scott Evans.

The Stouffville minor softball product has played at the national level while hurling for several American ISC teams over his distinguished career. He will once again pitch when available for the Rebels this season.

The pitching staff is rounded out by Hubie Basilio and John Sharpe. The pair will also play with the ISC's Pickering Heat men's A team this summer.

While the Rebels lineup is laced with ISC aces, it's been the new recruit from the hockey arenas who has been swinging the big bat in the early going. At the request of his friend Rob Watson, Scott McKinley decided to give softball another try after abandoning the game for hockey the past decade.

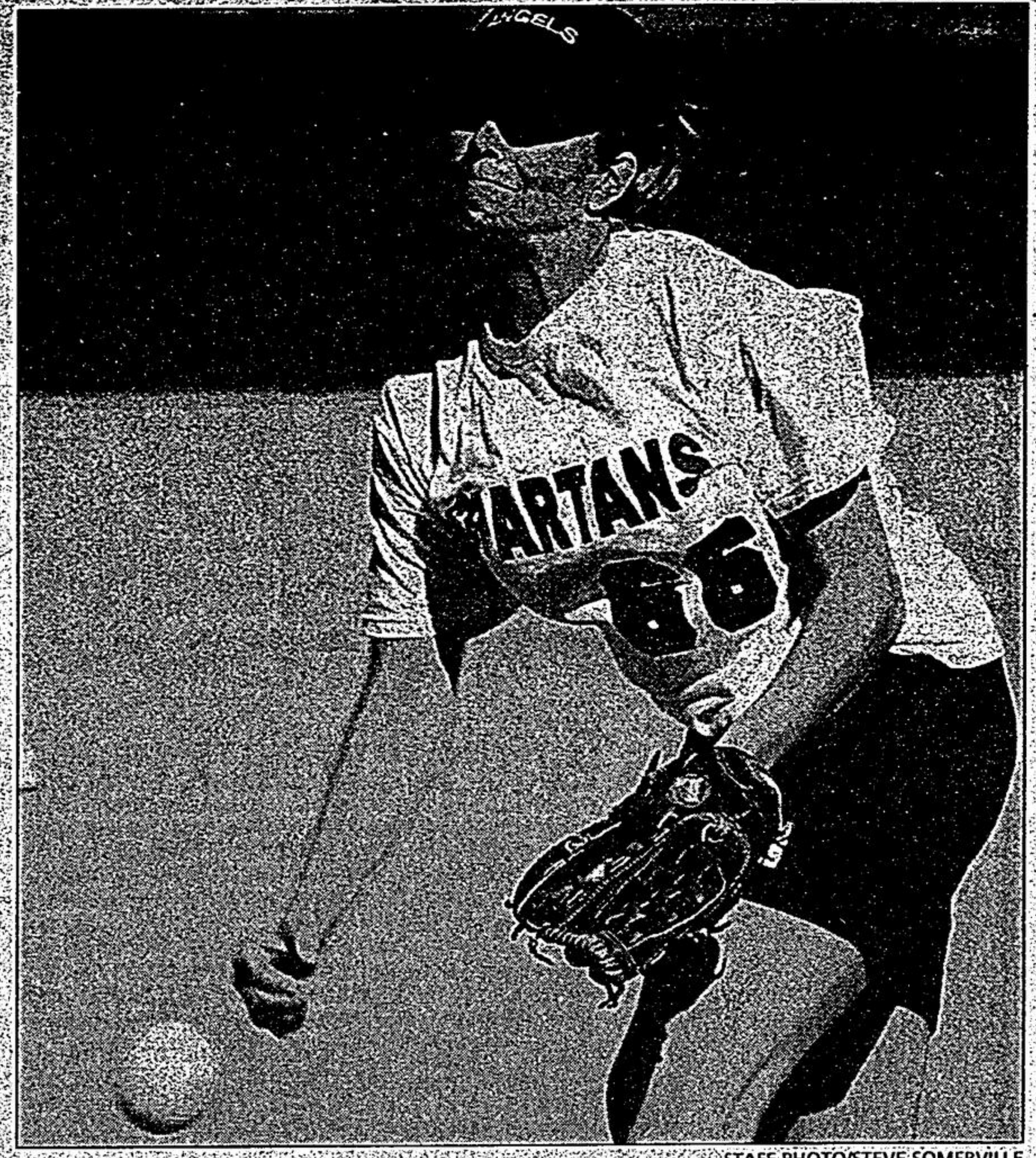
"Scott's been hitting up a storm," Ryan said. "In our second game of the season he had a two-run home run and a three-run homer."

Returning to the Rebels from last season are veteran catcher Dave Jones, Greg Horne, Cliff Herbert, Brad Wadsworth and Evan Boyd.

Gone from the Rebels is their dominating left-handed pitcher Paul Koert, who has headed west to play for a senior men's team in Saskatoon this season. Longtime Rebels pitcher and Claremont resident Tim Evans has retired.

The Rebels will also be without their longtime coach Frank Hendy, who is coaching the Goodwood bantam house league team that includes his grandson. His place has been taken by former Stouffville Merchants junior team member Jason Yoshida, who will assume the role of player-coach when his ailing knee heals.

The Rebels play their home games on Wednesdays at 8:30 p.m. at Claremont Park.



STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

SPECIAL DELIVERY

Stouffville District Secondary School pitcher Michelle Delude delivers a pitch to a Richmond Hill batter in Monday's YRAA girls softball contest at Memorial Park. The host Spartans won the game 9-5. Delude helped the cause by driving in four runs. On Tuesday, however, the Spartans suffered a 3-0 loss to Markville Secondary School and finished their regular season at 5-1. The Spartans will host a playoff game at Memorial Park Monday starting at 3:30 p.m.

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