

SPORTS DIGEST

Markham men stage comeback

The Markham Soccer Club men's team extended its Ontario Soccer League unbeaten streak to six games with a 5-3 come-from-behind win over visiting G.S. United on Friday.



Trailing 3-2 at the half, the Markham team came to life in the second half as Dariusz Ostaszewski ignited the comeback with two markers including an insurance goal on a penalty kick.

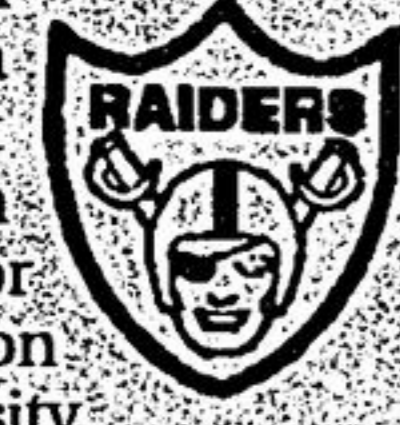
Neill Mair scored the eventual game-winning goal.

Larry Martin and Bart Ostaszewski staked Markham to a 2-0 lead early in the first half before G.S. United rallied with three unanswered goals.

Now 7-2-2 on the season and in first place, Markham will play in Guelph tomorrow and against Magic A.C. at North York's Esther Shiner Stadium on Saturday.

Raiders tame Grizzlies

Geoff Dyer scored three touchdowns and added two converts to propel the Markham Raiders bantams to a 34-32 win over the host North York Grizzlies in Central Ontario Minor Football League action Sunday at York University.



Tosh Johnson added two majors for the Raiders, now 4-2-1 on the season and occupants of second place. Ian Gabel added a two-point convert.

The Raiders will take to the road Sunday to face the Pickering Dolphins.

Cougars advance to provincials

The Markham Cougars under-14 girls fastpitch team advanced to the Provincial Grand Championships after finishing second in a provincial qualifier they hosted last week-end.



The Cougars opened the tournament with wins over Halton Hills 9-1 and the Ajax Raiders 9-2 before suffering a 5-4 loss to Brampton.

The Cougars then reversed their fortunes with an 11-1 pasting of Oakville.

Advancing to the final, the Cougars handed Brampton its first loss of the double knockout tournament 13-8 in extra innings. But the Cougars ran out of gas in the second game as Brampton prevailed 11-1 to finish first.

The Provincial Grand Championships will be held in Palmerston from Aug. 11-13.

On a separate note, the Cougars saw their chance to advance to the inaugural national 14-and-under championships in Summerside, P.E.I. come to an end when they suffered a 4-3 loss to Scarborough in a rescheduled provincial qualifying tournament contest last week at Milliken Park.

With the win, Scarborough advanced to the nationals along with Brampton, who went undefeated.



Baseball coach Larry Giangrosso walk a trio of boys through lead-off exercises during the Grand Slam and Team Ontario Baseball Camp at Green Acres summer camp in Markham Thursday.

Baseball in Canada progressing through Team Ontario Academy

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA
Sports Editor

Larry Giangrosso feels players learning the game of baseball in Canada can be equally as good as their counterparts south of the border, where the game is viewed as a traditional pastime. "Athletes are athletes," said the head baseball coach at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

As a guest instructor at the recent inaugural Team Ontario Baseball Academy at the Markham-based Green Acres Day Camp centre, Giangrosso points out the biggest difference between baseball programs in Canada and the U.S. lies in resources and aspirations.

In drawing an analogy with hockey, Giangrosso said, "Back home in Alabama if I wanted to find a hockey coach that could help me learn the game, there aren't too many of them around. I could find more help in Canada where there's probably a coach living on each street."

"If a Canadian wanted to improve his baseball skills, he might be hard pressed to find a baseball coach living on the same street. But in the United States there are probably more baseball coaches living on every street."

Having worked with a number of youth baseball camps in the U.S., Giangrosso also said youngsters south of the border have more knowledge in terms of a direction they can turn to if they wish to further their careers on the playing field.

While playing in the major leagues is the goal of most players, there's also the option of earning a free post-high school education through a baseball scholarship at a university.

"Back home, you ask a number of kids where they want to play ball and a lot of them will say they want to play at Alabama, Auburn, Texas or L.S.U. (U.S. collegiate baseball powerhouses)," he said. "Here (in Canada), apart from making it in the major leagues, a lot of youngsters don't know what's out there to be had."

Giangrosso said the Team Ontario Baseball Academy's concept is attempting to reduce the baseball disparity between the two countries.

Catering to youngsters between the ages of 9 and 13, the facility exposes youngsters to the game of baseball at an early age.

"What we want to do is prepare kids for the Team Ontario youth squad (17- and 18-year-olds) and to make the national team, travel internationally and maybe even get drafted by a major league team," said Sam Dempster, director of baseball

operations at the Green Acres-based Team Ontario Academy.

Also head baseball coach at Durham College and a scout with the New York Yankees, Dempster said the idea for this baseball concept began two years ago after he discussed it with Marc Picard, director of operations for the Team Ontario youth squad, and Bob Cohen, Team Ontario Baseball Program general manager.

Having supervised the Green Acres baseball camps in past years and armed with good training facilities that include five baseball diamonds, three batting cages and various training stations and aids, Dempster got his plan off the ground this year with the co-operation of the owners at the Green Acres Day Camp site.

The purpose of the camp, Dempster said, is to teach youngsters the grassroots of the game through a repetition of drills.

"If I had to put on a piano concert once a week, I wouldn't just practice once a week. I'd review my piece over and over," Dempster said.

"And when it comes to baseball, you just don't practice once a week for a game."

Beginning at 8:30 a.m. and concluding at 4:30 p.m., the daily itinerary is comprised of throwing and receiving mechanics, working out by position, hitting and playing a game each afternoon. Dempster is assisted by six coaches who have university baseball experience.

With the camp running for a two-week period, close to 60 youngsters from various parts of Toronto attended last week's first session.

Curtis Rice, an outfielder with the Markham Mariners pee-wees and a former camper under the old Green Acres baseball format, feels the new program has enhanced his playing skills.

"You get extra special training. It's definitely a higher level program," said the Markham resident.

"I've learned a lot about catching," added 14-year-old Matthew Regenstein, a catcher in the Thornhill select program.

A camper at Green Acres for the past eight years, Regenstein said the new Team Ontario program is far different from what he was used to under the old format.

"It's a big change. It's harder work. And it's better."

A Team Ontario Baseball Academy is also conducted in Richmond Hill and serves youngsters between the ages of 14 and 18.

Those interested in attending a future Team Ontario camp can call Dempster at 259-1129.



Perry Curiston

Don't take putting for granted

Putting can be a difficult part of the game to practice.

But those who do practice it can reap the rewards.

When people begin golf they always say, "First I will learn to get to the green and then I'll work on my putting. That's just practice anyways."

In all honesty, putting certainly isn't as exciting as driving your ball down the fairway. But it doesn't mean you should neglect it.

To find out just how good you are as a putter, try counting how many putts you take per round.

Good putters take 30 putts or less, average putters take between 31 and 61, poor putters take more than 36.

If you fall into the category of a poor putter take some time to improve it.

Practice short putts, nothing longer than five feet. If you can't sink those regularly then don't expect to sink many longer ones. Make a game of it.

Continue to practice until you hole out five in a row. When five becomes relatively easy, make it 10 in a row.

Technique can be just as important in putting as in your full swing.

Have your local CPGA professional give you a lesson.

Address your letters to: Impact Golf Schools, c/o Perry Curiston, 19 Mill St., Stouffville, Ont., L4A 1C6, or e-mail your comments to impactgolf.perry@3web.net

Perry Curiston is director of Impact Golf Schools and was the 1996 and 1998 Ontario PGA Teacher of the Year.

Leaside trio bowl up title

The Leaside Club ladies trebles team of Ruth Milani, Jeanette Del Carlo and Anita Gourley captured the Markham Lawn Bowling Club's recent Ross Dixon Financial Interclub Tournament.

The Agincourt team of Maureen Ferguson, Marion McGill and Cathy Roddock finished second, while the Markham entry of Grace Medland, Dorothy Silverthorn and Dorothy Boynton was third.

The Stouffville entry of Jane Hachey, Andrea Corner and Audrey Gibson was fourth.

At the recent annual Local Celebrities Tournament, the threesome of John Van Netten, Tess Van Netten and Davis Tsubouchi finished first. Second-place honours went to Jack Silverthorn, Grace Medland and Dick Peel, while Jake Rousseau, Sigrid Liebeck and Harry James were third.