

Pioneers win OBA qualifier

A single by Todd McLeish drove in Mark Cheeseman with the game-winning run in the bottom of the ninth inning to propel the Markham Pioneers to a 9-8 win over Peterborough in the deciding game of the best-of-three Ontario Baseball Association B qualifying final at Milliken Park on Thursday.

Cheeseman led off the inning with a triple. Matt Wagner and Mark Petrou were then intentionally walked. After Steve Horsley hit into a fielder's choice, McLeish came through with the second of his two hits on the night.

McLeish was also the winning pitcher, throwing two innings of scoreless relief.

Buoyed by a two-run homer from Horsley in the first inning, the Pioneers jumped to a 5-0 lead.

But the Tigers rallied to take an 8-6 advantage through 7 1/2 frames before the Pioneers scored twice in the eighth inning to knot the count and set the stage for McLeish's heroics.

Horsley, Jeff Fox and Cheeseman each had three hits, while Mark Petrou had two hits and two RBIs. Wagner had a hit and one RBI and Patrick Turner, one hit.

The Pioneers drew first blood in the series on Monday with a 13-3 mercy-shortened win at Milliken Park.

Petrou ignited a 16-hit attack with four hits and one RBI. Ian Ellis, Fox and Wagner each had two hits and one RBI. Cheeseman had two hits while Horsley, Shelby Nelson and Turner were each credited with a hit and one RBI. Hadfield worked the first six innings to earn the win.

The following night, the Tigers capitalized on their home field advantage to even the series after plating seven runs in the final trip to the plate to record a 7-6 win.

Cheeseman had a no-hitter going through eight innings before the roof caved in. Horsley took the loss in relief.

Not helping matters for the Pioneers was the ejection of Nelson and Ellis in the final inning.

The Pioneers will advance to the OBA B championships in Kendal on Labour Day weekend.

Gibbons hopes to motor his way to CASCAR crown

Stouffville race car driver seeks to win third checkered flag this year

BRUCE STAPLEY
Correspondent

Peter Gibbons will be out to extend his CASCAR National Series point standings lead when he takes to the Mosport Speedway road course in his Chev Monte Carlo this weekend.

Gibbons and his Canadian Tire Racing Team are looking for their third checkered flag of the CASCAR season at the Mosport 250-km event, which runs tomorrow.

The 38-year-old Goodwood resident, who is the defending national CASCAR champion, has already posted victories in Calgary in late July and Montreal the first weekend of August. He has also won four qualifiers to date.

Gibbons has 975 points in the CASCAR National point standings, giving



PETER GIBBONS: Hopes to maintain CASCAR National Series points lead.

him a slim four-point lead over his closest rival as he goes for a second straight national crown. The Mosport race is the second last of the 13-race CASCAR Eastern series, with the season winding up at London, Ontario's Delaware Speedway Park next weekend.

"We need to go out there and win races and lead as many laps as we can," said Gibbons.

Time trials for tomorrow's feature race were to take place yesterday, with qualifiers scheduled for today. Gibbons expects to be right up front when Sunday's race gets under way.

"The last four road races I've been on the pole and I've done well."

Gibbons placed second at the Exide Battery 2000 at Mosport June 17 after setting a Mosport oval track record of 22.092 seconds in his qualifying lap to earn the pole position. The record was one of six track marks shattered by Gibbons this season. Brake problems caused him to settle for a third-place finish at the Exide 99 held as part of the Molson Indy weekend in Toronto in July.

Gibbons said he's looking forward to competing at Mosport because it gives he and his racing team a break from the travel involved with most race destinations in Canada and the United States.

"As far as the racing goes, it's just another race. But I like it because it's so close."

Mariners advance to OBA championships

The Markham Mariners minor mosquitos earned a berth in the Ontario Baseball Association provincials after going undefeated in their playdowns in Oakville last weekend.

First-place finishers in their York Simcoe Baseball Association regular season schedule with a 22-0-1 mark, the Mariners received two-hit, two-RBI efforts from Ryan Murphy and Jack Caradonna to rout Riverside 25-4 in their opening game.

Jesse Milanovich was the winning pitcher. The Mariners' defence came to the front in the second outing as Alliston Wong, Peter Rodrigues and Adam Velocci executed a key double play with none out in the final inning that enabled Markham to hold off the Windsor Expos 4-1.

Justin Mintsoulis collected a key run-scoring hit to give the Mariners a three-run cushion entering the final inning. Wong earned the save for winning pitcher Anish Bhide.

With a berth for the provincials on the line in the next game against Guelph, Chris Romano's double drove in Caradonna who led off with a double in the bottom of the seventh to lift the Mariners to a dramatic 7-6 victory.

Caradonna collected three hits and two RBIs while Romano added two hits and two RBIs for the Mariners. Bhide had a hit and Donny Marchione, one RBI. Wong earned the win in relief.

Securing a berth in the provincials, the Mariners concluded the tournament with a 16-6 win over the Brampton Red Sox.

Velocci had three hits and two RBIs while Caradonna, Milanovich and Murphy each had two hits and two RBIs. Romano, Bhide, Aaron Caputo, Marchione, Rodrigues and Argenis Paz each had one hit and one RBI. Caputo was the winning pitcher.

The OBA provincials will be held Labour Day weekend in Burlington.

Ontario Cup semi-finals to be played in Markham

The road to the Ontario Cup final will go through Mount Joy field this weekend as semi-final games in the under-13 girls, under-18 girls, under-14 boys and under-19 boys divisions will take place.

The under-13 girls will kick off action today at 11 a.m. with the Burlington Ice meeting the Mississauga Dixie Blue Bombers. The other match at 1 p.m. will feature Scarborough West Rouge and Scarborough United Magic.

Following those games, the under-14 boys matchups will feature London United and North York Azzurri at 3 p.m. Stoney Creek Saltfleet 86ers and the

SPORTS DIGEST

Oakville Strikers will follow at 5 p.m. The under-18 girls semi-finals will take place tomorrow at 10 a.m. with the Oakville Extreme taking on the Milton Magic. The Nepean Iron Eagles will then face the Pickering Power at noon.

At 3 p.m., the under-19 boys will feature the Thorold Cobras and the Vaughan Rockets in one semi-final. Following that game, the Scarborough Azzurri Athletics will tackle the

Kitchener Spirit.

Atom Raiders lose opener

The Markham Raiders atoms opened their Central Ontario Minor Football League season with a 33-12 loss to the host Burlington Stampeders.

Raiders' quarterback Elran Granek scored both majors while running back Alex Clarke had over 150 yards in rushing. The atoms will host Oshawa tomorrow at Mount Joy Field at 8 p.m.

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