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Spoljaric ponders retirement from baseball

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA
Sports Editor

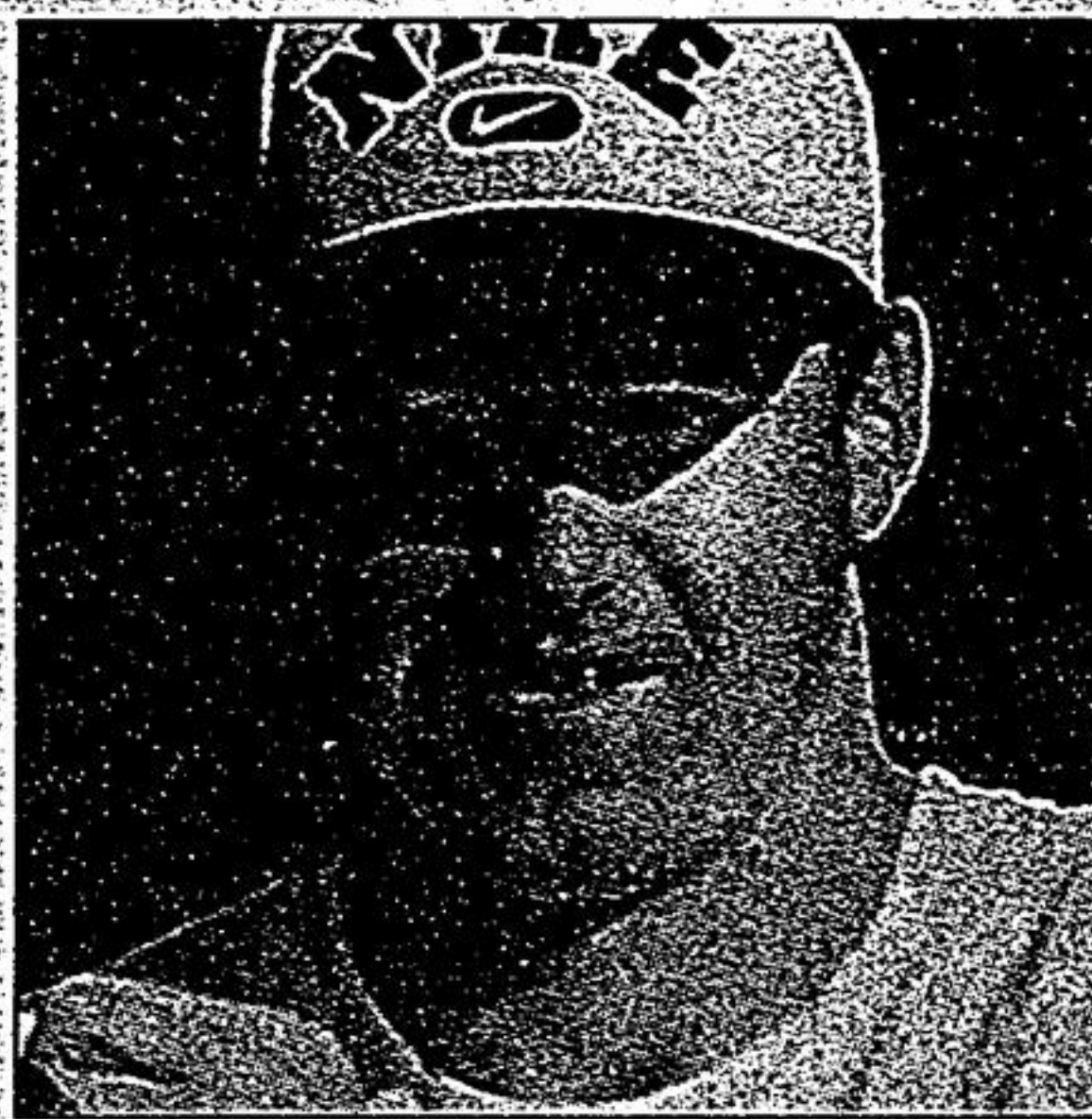
Paul Spoljaric feels he can still throw strikes and get batters out.

Unfortunately for the Kelowna, B.C. native, who spent some time pitching with the Toronto Blue Jays for three seasons starting in 1994, 1996 and part of 1999, there aren't too many major league baseball clubs that share his opinion.

Returning to Stouffville last week to visit his in-laws, Spoljaric is contemplating retirement from the game for which he's been a part of in the major leagues for six seasons.

After spending time with the Kansas City Royals and their AAA affiliate last season, the 30-year-old lefthanded hurler began this season at the Tampa Bay Devil Rays training camp, but was released with one day remaining in spring camp.

"They told me that if I put the uniform on and throw strikes I'd be on the team. But that was a bunch of b.s.," the



PAUL SPOLJARIC: Former Stouffville resident and Blue Jays pitcher was released by Cleveland Indians earlier this month.

former Sharon resident recalled.

From there, the Cleveland Indians signed Spoljaric and dispatched him to their AA affiliate in Akron, Ohio.

After labouring one week there, he went to the Indians' AAA affiliate in

Buffalo and pitched in four games before being the odd man out when their AAA roster had to be trimmed by one player on May 4.

Spoljaric said he received a call from the Los Angeles Dodgers organization. But he felt it didn't sound too appealing enough for him to go there.

"Someone must have gotten hurt and they needed someone to step in right away until that player returns," he speculated.

Spoljaric has also been contacted by some teams in the Independent League. However, it didn't appeal to him.

"The phone hasn't been ringing off the hook," he said. "I know I can still perform and do the job. But I'm running low on time. This season has been a wash."

With a wife and two sons to support, Spoljaric is weighing offers from two jobs outside of baseball in the Toronto area.

"If I get one of the two jobs that I'm interviewing for, I'll pack it in," he said.

Start your collection Monday. Finish it Thursday.



Wednesday, May 23
From the Snow to the Show
Pin #2

Monday, May 21
Turn Back the Clock
Pin #1



Thursday, May 24
A Summer Tradition Since 1977
Pin #3



Monday, Wednesday and Thursday we take on the White Sox. Monday, to celebrate Victoria Day and the Jays vs White Sox 1977 Opening Day, both teams will be wearing vintage uniforms. Each night, the first 15,000 fans through the gates will receive a different Blue Jays 25th Anniversary Season commemorative pin card depicting a great moment in Blue Jays history. Collect 'em all.

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