

Bridlewood, Weekend Warriors claim top prizes at snowy slo-pitch event

Frigid temperatures didn't dampen the enthusiasm at Raiders' 20th annual tourney

In the past 19 years that the Raiders staged their annual slo-pitch tournament at Memorial Park, convenor Murray Pattenden couldn't recall a time when the weather hovered near the freezing mark.

That was until this year. With below-normal temperatures invading Stouffville during the Victoria Day long weekend, the 20th annual Raiders' slo-pitch tournament was conducted under conditions that didn't resemble spring.

"It was cold and it's the first time (snow) has ever happened in the tournament," Pattenden recalled. "We had a good laugh and the tournament went well."

With a total of 20 teams, 10 in each of the E and D Divisions taking to the Memorial Park ball diamonds for the two-day event, Scarborough-based entry Bridlewood captured the E Division title with a 12-8 win over the Phantoms from Cannington on Sunday.

Going undefeated in the tournament with a 5-0 mark, Bridlewood reached the final after defeating

the Red Hot Dawgs of Pickering 15-6 in their semi-final match. The Phantoms advanced to the final with an 18-7 win over Toronto-based Boys Are Back, who made their 18th appearance in the tournament.

In winning their division, Bridlewood pocketed \$300 in first-place prize money.

The Weekend Warriors of Brampton claimed the D Division crown with a 17-7 win over the Huskies of Bowmanville.

In reaching the final, the Weekend Warriors, who went 5-1 in the tournament, won their semi-final game over Toronto-based Diamond Kings 21-10.

The Huskies defeated Time Zone of Uxbridge 18-9 in their semi-final encounter.

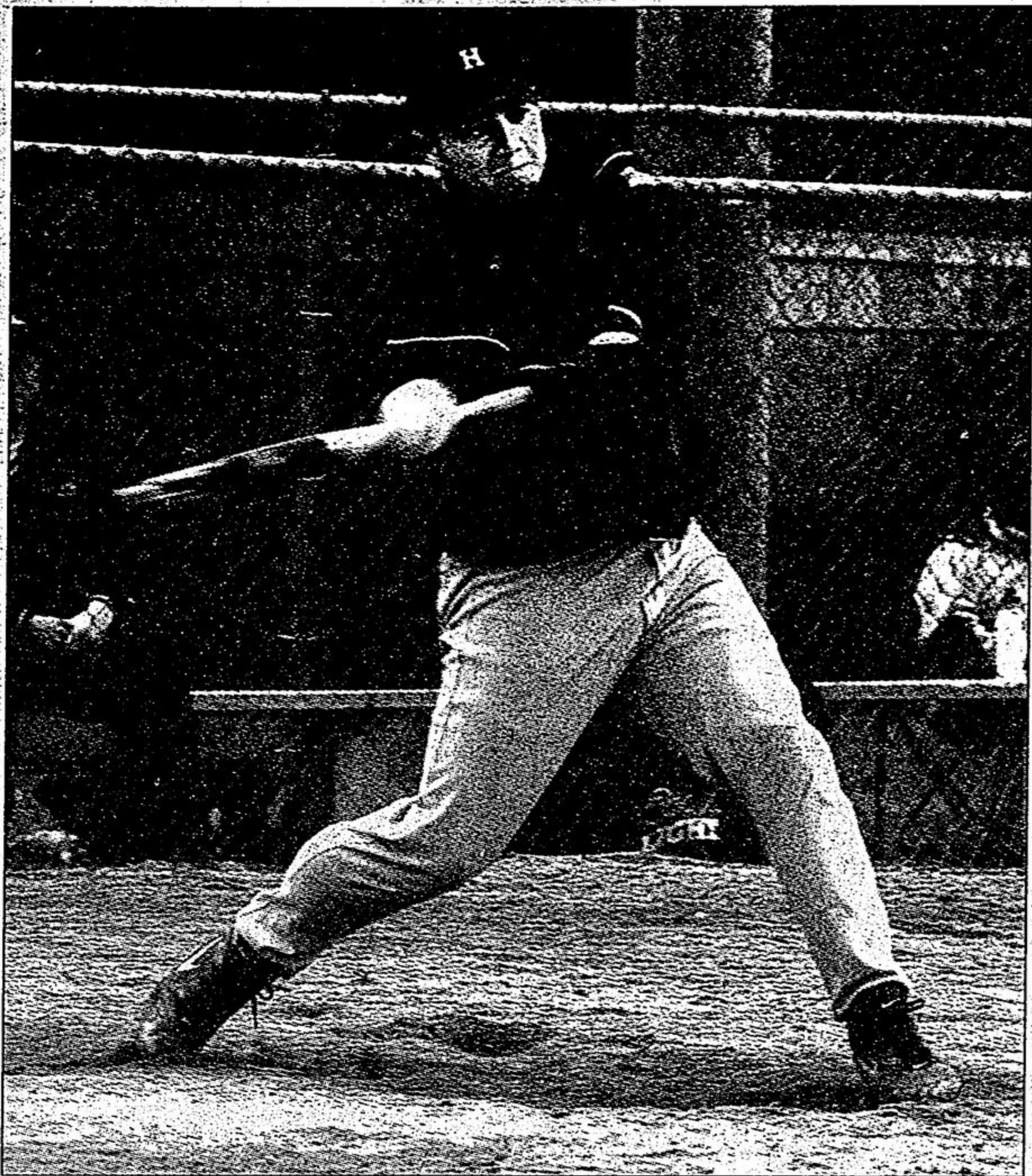
In winning their title, the Weekend Warriors took home the top prize of \$350.

Several local entries took part in the tournament.

In the D Division, the C.P.M. Cavemen of Stouffville advanced to the quarter-finals before coming out on the short end of a 22-21 decision to the Weekend Warriors.

In the E Division, Easy Win of Stouffville reached the quarter-finals before bowing out with a 13-6 loss to the Red Hot Dawgs of Pickering.

The A and S Old Twisters, a team comprised of Raiders' alumni players, won one of three games.



PHOTO/ERIN RILEY

Huskies batter Mike Nesbitt gets set to unload on this offering during Saturday's action in the 20th annual Raiders Slo-Pitch Tournament at Memorial Park. The Huskies advanced to the D Division final before suffering a 17-7 loss to the Weekend Warriors from Brampton.

Taws reaches the podium in Formula Ford racing debut

Ashley Taws became the first woman to stand on the podium at a Canadian Formula Ford Championship race as she drove her Be Anything With Barbie at Wal-Mart vehicle to a third-place finish in her first pro race at Mosport International Raceway near Bowmanville on Saturday.



ASHLEY TAWS
Stouffville race driver happy with third-place finish.

The 18-year-old Stouffville resident was on a fast pace throughout the weekend, setting competitive times in practice sessions before qualifying third.

In Saturday's race, Taws ran as high as third and as low as fifth in the opening laps before settling into third for the duration.

Initially surprised by the aggressive racing at the pro level, Taws quickly adapted and proved she'd be no pushover.

"AIM Autosport gave me a great set up on the car, so I was very confident with the handling," she said. "I'm really happy to have finished in the top three in my first race at this level. It's a great way to start the season."

With a successful first outing under her belt, Taws is now looking forward to the next race which takes her to Montreal for the Canadian Grand Prix, June 7-9.

SPORTS DIGEST

Gibbons 13th in CASCAR opener

Peter Gibbons began his CASCAR season last weekend at Delaware Speedway near London, Ont. with a great qualifying effort and a 13th-place finish in the Mopar Parts 250 feature race.

Driving his Canadian Tire Monte Carlo Chevrolet, the Stouffville resident sat on the outside of the front row after recording a qualifying time of 19.668 seconds.

Gibbons seized the lead on lap 14 of the 250-lap event that was held under cold weather and high winds, before a restart on lap 21 shuffled him back to fourth.

Gibbons remained in contention throughout the race before adversity struck on lap 180 when he punctured a right front tire after challenging for the lead.

Forced to pit under the green flag, Gibbons went down two laps but made one back before Robbie Thompson of Southampton, Ont. took the checkered flag.

"We did all we could, when you get flat tires under the green there is nothing you can do. The Canadian Tire crew got a good workout today. We know the car is good and we will be strong for the race at Peterborough," said an optimistic Gibbons after the race and in reference to their next CASCAR event.

Stratas vaults to the top of her novice class at provincials

A visit to a gymnasium for a birthday party gives Gormley resident the incentive to try gymnastics

BY JIM THOMAS
Correspondent

Five years ago, Alexandra Stratas attended a birthday party.

It was held in a gymnasium. The event proved so enjoyable, the Gormley resident thought she would give gymnastics a try.

Today, 10 years later, the Grade 6 honors student who attends Holy Trinity School in Richmond Hill, is a provincial gold medalist.

Competing in the novice class at Sudbury during the weekend of May 10, Stratas received a trophy, a plaque and four medals in competition that included the vault, the bars, the balance beam and the floor.

She captured a gold for performance all-round, rolling up the highest individual score.

A total of 54 girls, ages 10 and 11, took part.

"My heart was pounding throughout," said Mary Stratas,



ALEXANDRA STRATAS: Received a trophy, plaque and four medals at provincials in Sudbury.

her mother.

Both she and husband Paul attended the meet.

Alexandra (Alex to her friends) trains out of the Academy of Sports and Fitness

in Richmond Hill. Her head coach is Paula Johnson. Her assistant head coach is Brenda Mader. She spends 23 hours in training each week.

The floor is Alexandra's specialty. Routines include tumbling, acrobatics and dance. She'll advance to the pre-junior division next year and hopes to again compete in the provin-

The floor is Alexandra's specialty. Routines include tumbling, acrobatics and dance.

cial. Her goal is the nationals.

Gymnastics is a demanding sport, her mother explains, necessitating a commitment not unlike figure skating. It's not unusual for her daughter to pack her ankles and knees in ice following workouts and competitions. Physiotherapy is also required from time to time.

"One must be able to perform under pressure, regardless of talent," Mrs. Stratas said, "a perfect performance can be ruined by one small slip."

Despite a rigorous training schedule, Alexandra says she's never entertained thoughts of quitting. "I enjoy it too much," she claims.

In a spectators' role, her parents do also, but quickly admit competition of the kind held at Sudbury, is hard on the nerves.

Six girls were selected to enter the provincials from each Metro Region. The Academy of Sports and Fitness is located in Metro East.

Alexandra says occasionally she's asked by classmates to display her skills, usually in the schoolyard.

"That's why she always wears shorts under her skirt," her mother laughs, "she never knows when she'll be upside down."