

Dunkeld is a good sport for all seasons

Athletics have played big part in Stouffville councillor's life

BY JIM THOMAS
Correspondent

He's a man for all seasons: at the ball diamond and bowling green spring and summer; the curling rink and hockey arena, fall and winter.

For Stouffville's Cliff Dunkeld, these sites are "second homes." He's served the role of sports builder and sports player more than 50 years.

Born at Atha in northern Pickering, Dunkeld obtained his secondary school education at Stouffville and Pickering.

He was employed first at Scotiabank in Markham, then with Pickering Township and later Ontario County and Durham region. He retired in 1996, but not from sports.

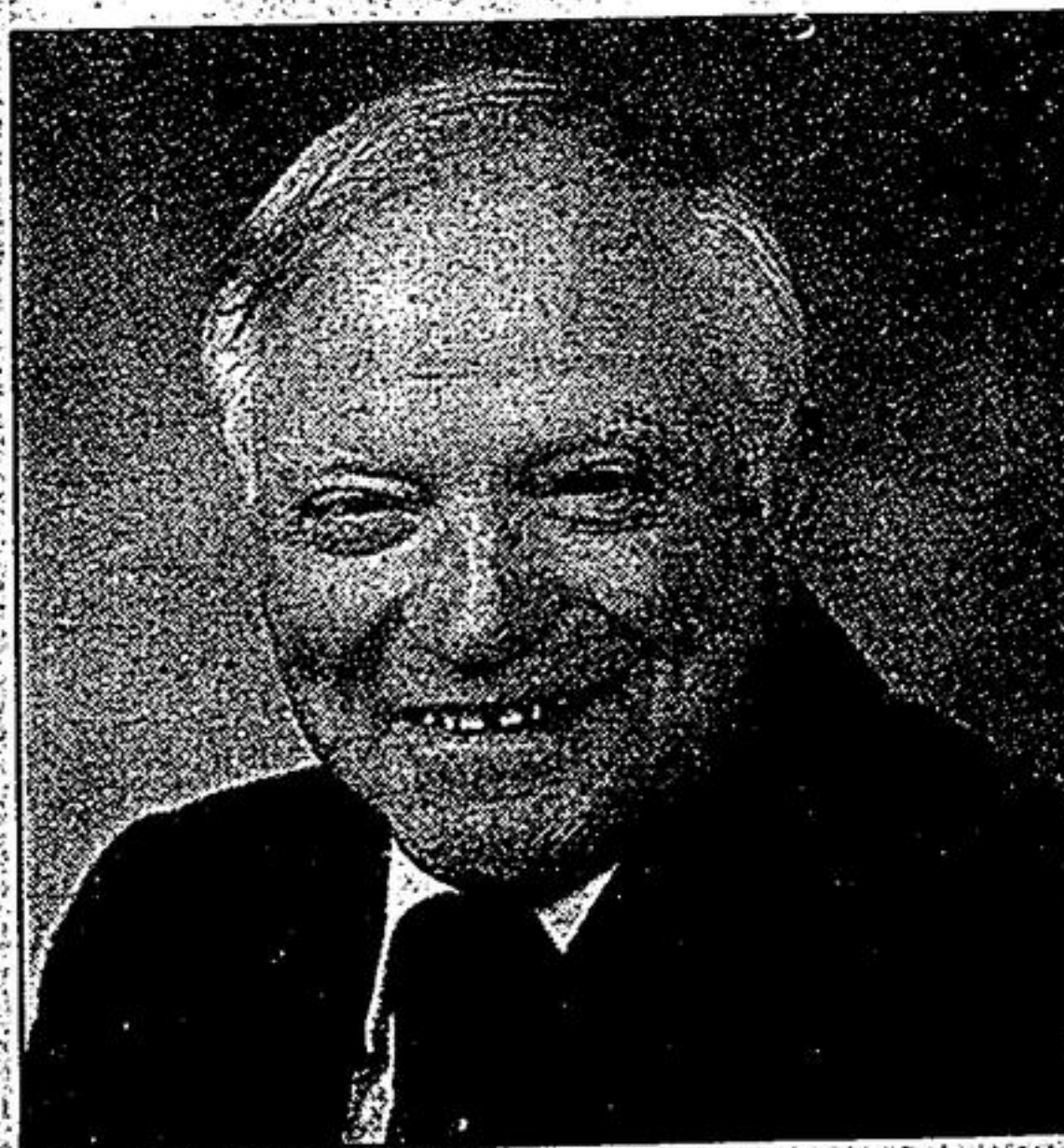
He continues involvements in softball, hockey, lawn bowling and curling.

It was Dunkeld who, back in the 50s, helped organize the Clarendon Community Softball League. He played shortstop with Altona, a team that would later win two championships over a 10-year period.

When manager Merv Bunker retired, Dunkeld stepped into his shoes.

As the league grew, so did the need for umpires. Dunkeld turned to officiating, first on the bases and later at the plate. Here, he gained the respect of coaches and players alike.

It was co-umpire Gord "Swifty" Todd who coined the phrase, "the closer the play, the louder the call."



CLIFF DUNKELD: At 70 years of age, town councillor still enjoys going to the hockey rink or ball diamond to watch games.

It always worked, Dunkeld recalls.

"It was a great league," Dunkeld remembers. "Crowds in excess of 500 were not uncommon."

Later, Dunkeld's interests turned to softball, both girls and boys in Clarendon and Stouffville. The involvement of family, four daughters and two sons, only increased his enthusiasm.

When a Stouffville peewee team was on the verge of folding for want of a coach, Dunkeld came to the front. He also reorganized a midget girls, rep club after obtaining the services of ace Stouffville righthander Kathy Lewis.

It was Dunkeld who brought the Stouffville Stingers to town, a team that would later win an All-Ontario intermediate title.

But Dunkeld didn't reserve his energies just for softball. In hockey, he was a driving force, organizing the first local female league in 1974 with more than 120 players. He was ably assisted in this endeavour by Joanne Steel. Together, they were able to break an existing all-male barrier despite predictions it wouldn't last. Dunkeld and Steel proved them wrong.

It was Linda (Moffat) Stapleton who convinced Dunkeld to volunteer his coaching skills at the college level. He joined the Seneca College coaching staff and remained there seven years.

"This was a highlight," Dunkeld admits. "We played against other universities, many in the United States and often beat them too."

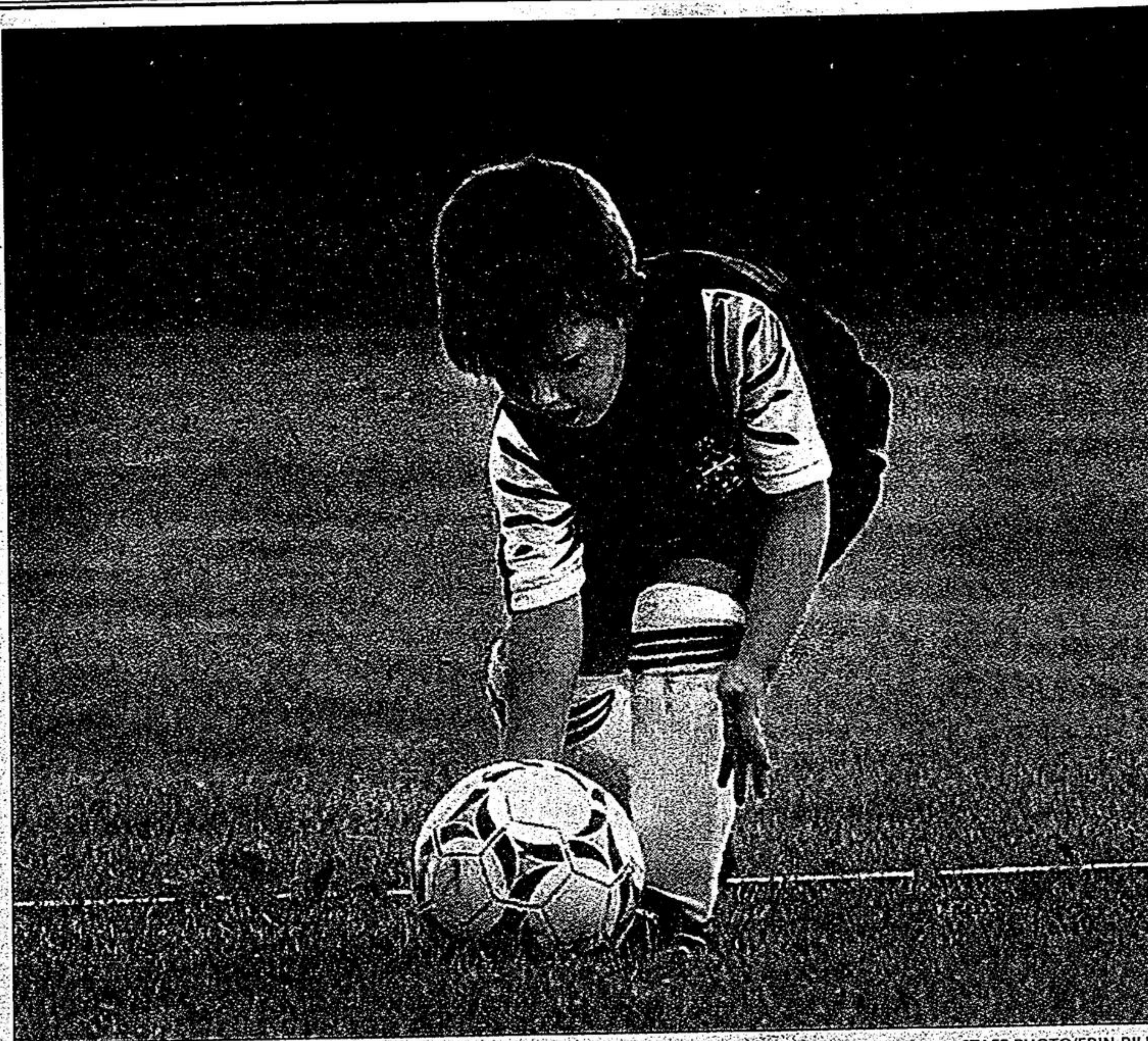
Over the years, Dunkeld's held almost every conceivable executive position including president of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Minor Softball Association; president of what's now the Markham-Stouffville Girls Hockey Association and auditor within the Ontario Amateur Softball Association. He remains a director with the town's minor ball association.

He was a first recipient of Whitchurch-Stouffville's Sports Personality of the Year award, an honour sponsored by the Stouffville Sun. His house is filled with citations.

Even with so many sports interests, Dunkeld still finds time to serve as a town councillor and a director with the Stouffville Lions Club.

"It was all for the kids," Dunkeld insists. "I've always enjoyed watching children have fun."

This enjoyment has extended over half a century and through two generations. And, at 70 years young, he's not through yet. "I still like stopping off at the arena and the ball park to see how things are going," he concludes.



STAFF PHOTO/ERIN RILEY

THE BALL STOPS HERE

Jonathan Friesen, a member of the Whitchurch-Stouffville under-eight boys' Milk and Cookies house league soccer team, appears to have a handle on stopping this ball during a practice held at the Novopharm soccer field in Stouffville on Monday.

Mother Nature not kind to Gibbons

A great start, but a disappointing finish was what Peter Gibbons experienced when he took his Canadian Tire Chevy to Mosport International Raceway last Sunday for the CASCAR Clarington 250 race.

The Stouffville resident earned the top pole position through qualifying as he recorded the fastest time on the final lap at 1:26.54.

But when the race concluded, Gibbons finished 25th.

Beginning the race under threatening skies, Gibbons ran at the front of the field before the rains came.

After a 20-minute delay, the cars attempted to dry off the track surface, but were unsuccessful.

CASCAR officials though, decided to continue the race.

This move didn't help



PETER GIBBONS: Was disappointed with CASCAR's decision to continue race under adverse track conditions.

Gibbons as he was unable to see through a fogged up windshield and drove onto a painted part of the track before spinning off and

hitting hard into the wall two laps prior to the halfway mark.

The race was declared official at the halfway mark and Gibbons finished in the 25th position.

An angry Gibbons was disappointed in the decision to continue the race.

"At the drivers' meeting we are told we are not going to race in the rain, then during the race CASCAR officials changed their minds. This was a dangerous situation we were put in today and I know a lot of drivers who feel the same way.

"We would have won the race if the track conditions were dry and our car would not be destroyed like it is now."

Through four CASCAR events, Gibbons occupies 12th spot overall with 495 points. D.J. Kennington is the overall points leader with 601.

Fine Children's Wear



Visit our location to view our new summer collection

4981 Highway 7 E., Markham
Across from Markville

905-946-9738

