



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

## BORN TO RUN CROSS COUNTRY

Members of the Stouffville District Secondary School Spartans cross-country team take to the school's track to prepare for their upcoming season, which includes a meet tomorrow at Markham's Milne Park Conservation Area starting at noon for high school students. Among those in the photograph include (from far left): Tim Dunham, Andrew Lowrie, Alanna Lloyd, Allison Lloyd, Denise Reesor, Carolyn Tubb and Jen Lloyd.

# Persistence pays off for Chubbuck

*Stouffville resident is a late-bloomer on the fastball diamond with Markham women's team*

BY JIM THOMAS  
Correspondent

From bench-sitter to most valuable player. Such is the cinderella story involving Cera Chubbuck. A resident of Stouffville, the 19-year-old Unionville High School graduate patrolled rightfield this past season with the Markham Lynx in a junior women's fastball league. While great during the summer schedule, Chubbuck proved herself outstanding in a recent two-week tournament at the Canadian National Exhibition.

Her team won a runner-up trophy; team members received silver medals and she was voted the tournament's most valuable player.

"I was shocked; I couldn't believe it," said Chubbuck on hearing the announcement, "I didn't know what I'd done to deserve it."

But the judges knew. They saw her .500 batting average; her sparking defensive plays and a throwing arm that continually cut off runners at the plate.

"At first I thought it was a joke," Chubbuck said, then she heard her mother screaming "that's my girl; that's my girl!"

She was mobbed by her teammates.

"What a way to end a season," she said, "it was something I'll never forget."

But the hero's role was something Chubbuck never thought would happen. For, as a select in the Whitchurch-Stouffville minor system, she spent most of the time on the bench.

"I guess the coaches lacked faith in me," she recalls, "but I decided to stick with it."

She's glad she did. When the Stouffville bantam team folded, Chubbuck was invited to try out with Markham. Coaches there, saw something in her others hadn't seen. She was asked to stay. She toiled this past season with the junior rep club, one of two Markham entries that played in the same league.

The Markham Pumas are arch rivals, Chubbuck says, eventually defeating the Lynx to win the CNE tournament.

Chubbuck has always enjoyed sports, representing Whitchurch Highlands school in regional meets on several occasions. The long jump was her specialty. She also participated in volleyball and basketball.

Chubbuck's early house league years were less than memorable.

"I was horrible," she recalls, "I was afraid of the ball."

How different today. She will do anything to keep a ball from going through, sometimes turning sure hits into routine outs.

"Often it's a case of do or die," she admits, "you can be a hero or an idiot."

At the plate, Chubbuck claims she doesn't possess a lot of power, but always endeavours to get on base.

Chubbuck holds Markham coach, Al Loughery in high regard.

"He's great," she says, "he expects everyone to do her best yet still have fun."

What might have sparked Chubbuck's interest in the sport was the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta, Georgia. It was here where Chubbuck attended the inaugural women's fastball competition.

"It was awesome," she remembers, "I'll never forget it."

As for her playing future, Chubbuck hopes to continue it by earning a fastball scholarship and attend a university in the United States.



CERA CHUBBUCK: Stouffville resident played a key role in fortunes of Markham Lynx fastball team.

## Koert's live arm earns lots of respect

*Canadian senior team selects Stouffvillite to play in Pan Am qualifier*

BY JIM THOMAS  
Correspondent

A career in fastball? Why not?

There are career hockey players; career tennis players; career soccer players and career golfers.

Why not career fastball players?

That's what Stouffville's Paul Koert began asking himself following ongoing successes in Team Canada championships. Within a period of seven years, the 23-year-old hard-throwing south-paw helped lead his club to four firsts, one second and two fourths.

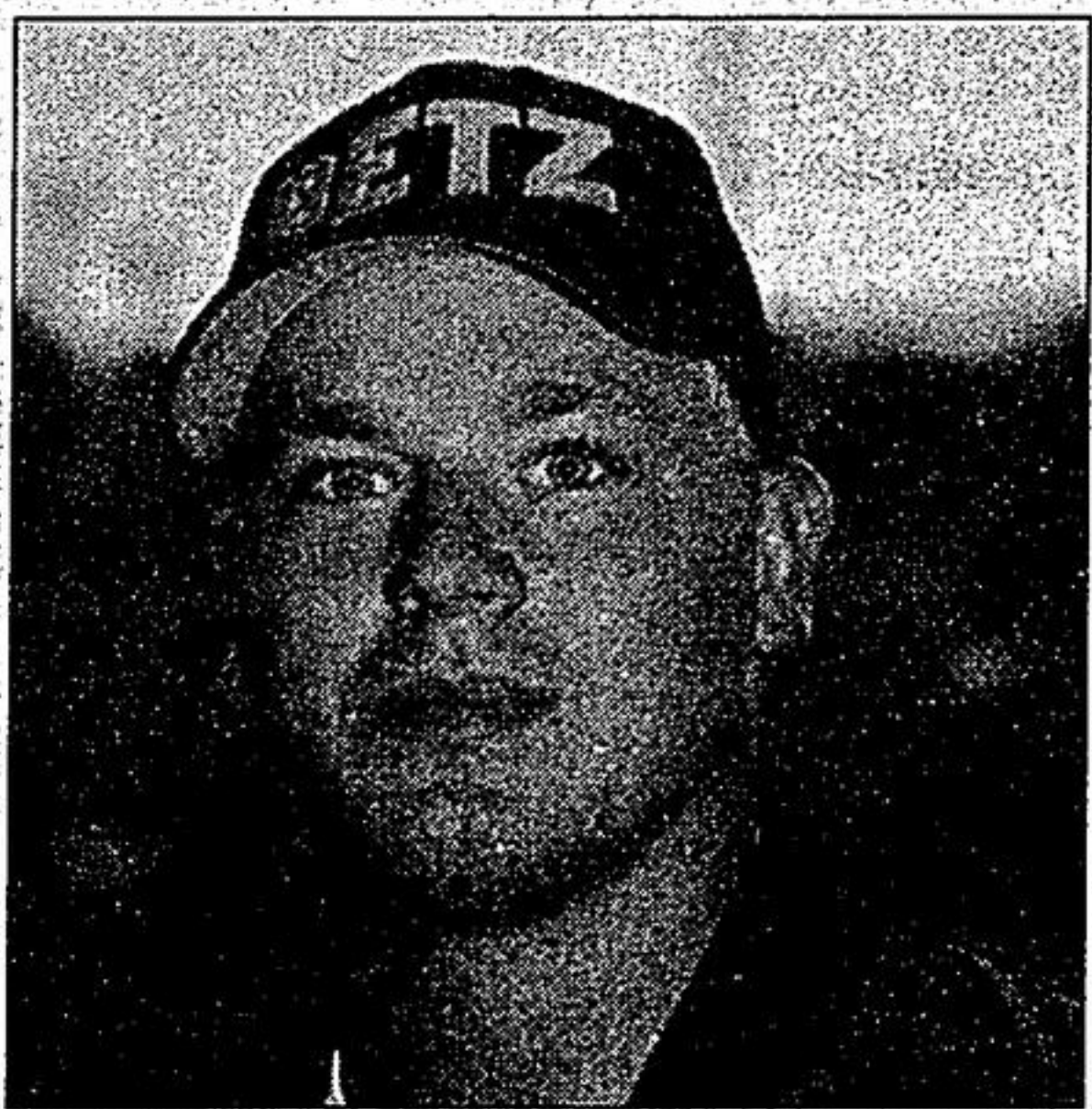
In November, he's headed for the Dominican Republic where, as a member of Canada's senior team, he hopes they'll qualify for the 2003 Pan Am Games in Rio Isabela, Santo Domingo. Only the top five will go.

Canada is the defending champion.

In 2004, he's hopeful Canada will advance to the world championships in New Zealand.

Formerly of Unionville, Koert moved with his parents to Whitchurch-Stouffville 13 years ago. He attended Ballantrae Public School and Stouffville District Secondary School.

Even as a student at SDSS, Koert's pitching prowess was recognized. His team won the York Regionals four years



PAUL KOERT: Stouffville native pitched this past season with a team based in Amsterdam, New York.

in a row. Other players he remembers included: Evan and Brett Boyd; Dan Tardella and Jody Infurnari.

At age 19, he pitched for Team Canada in junior world competition, finishing third behind New Zealand and Australia. In 1997, with Team Ontario, his team won gold. The meet was held in Brandon, Man.

More recently, Koert played with Amsterdam, New York in world play. Over the season he had a record of 16 wins, five losses and 187 strikeouts. His earned-run-average was 1.64. This year, the world tournament was held in Waterloo Ont. There, he recorded two wins, one loss with an ERA of 1.03.

Next year, Koert is headed for Green Bay, Wisconsin where he will suit up with the '51 Classics.

In addition to the 2003 worlds, Koert will also participate in the American nationals in Midland, Michigan and the Canadian nationals at Owen Sound. He holds both U.S. and Canadian citizenships.

Koert admits that, back in Grade 9 at Stouffville District Secondary School, he never dreamed fastball would take him this far.

"Back then, I didn't know fastball had so much to offer," said Koert, whose pitches have been clocked in the low 80s.

But Koert possesses more than speed. His arsenal includes a drop-ball, a rise-ball, a change-up and a curve.

"Good movement and picking spots are important," he says. "You also must study every batter; get to know their strengths and weaknesses."

Koert admits he depends greatly on his catcher.

"I do the pitching and he does the thinking," he says.

Standing 6-foot-3 and weighing 225 pounds, Koert poses a formidable opponent to opposing batters.

"Fastball has always been a pitcher's game," he claims, "with a distance of 46 feet and a ball speed of 85 miles an hour, the hitter has little time to react."

How long can he last?

"As long as my arm holds up and I remain competitive," he says.

Whenever Koert decides to hang up his glove and spikes, he will have a roomful of trophies, plaques and medals as constant reminders of an outstanding career.

## Stars settle for silver at Willowdale tourney

The Markham-Stouffville Stars bantam A girls hockey team took home the silver medal from the recent Willowdale Tournament after suffering a heart-breaking 1-0 shooting loss to the Niagara Falls Rapids



in the title game.

In reaching the final, the Stars battled the Vaughan Flames to a 2-2 tie before being edged 1-0 by the Rapids. But the Stars rebounded from that loss to blank Scarborough 3-0 to reach the final.

Scoring for the Stars were: Hayley Hughes, Nyssa Kuwahara and Corliss Bean with one goal and one assist; Ashley McLellan and Stephanie Krucas;

one goal each and Jordanna Peroff, Amanda Fawns, Bethany Oeming and Alexandra Forsyth one assist.

Also contributing to the Stars' success were Kelly Setter, Britney Bince, Lauren Chin-Fook, Jenna Callaghan and Jade Penna.

Goaltending duties were shared between Danielle Skoufranis and Cassandra McNichol.