

Stouffville Sun-Tribune

SPORTS

Ball mites honour Burkholder tradition at weekend provincials

BY JIM THOMAS
Correspondent

When Stouffville hosts the provincial junior mite softball championship tournament this weekend at Memorial Park, three generations of one family will participate in Saturday's opening ceremonies.

Howard Burkholder, a former member of the world champion Richmond Hill Dynes and currently coach of the Stouffville Mennos, will throw out the ceremonial first pitch at noon.

Other family members taking part are Howard's son Chris, a third baseman with the Mennos and a member of three Ontario championship teams and Chris's son Josh, a pitcher/catcher/first baseman with the host Stouffville Storm.

The tournament begins Saturday at 10 a.m., followed by afternoon games at 12:30, 2:30 and 4:30. Competition resumes Sunday at 9 a.m. with a second game at 11.

The third and fourth place teams will play at 1 p.m. with the finals for gold and silver medals at 3 p.m.

Entries, in addition to Stouffville, include Stone Mills, near Kingston, Orleans, near Ottawa and Napanee.

The Storm is coached by Kelly Matthews, assisted by Mark Morrow and Chris Brown.

The Stouffville lineup includes Josh Burkholder, Troy Connor, Edward Matthews, Matthew Morrow, Wesley Cowie, Michael DeMelo, Ryan Peterson, Daniel Merkgamer, Matthew Rundle, Kerrick Brown, Ben Cook and Kevin Matthews.

The three-generation Burkholder family participation is, in itself, an amazing softball story.

Howard has been a player and coach of the Stouffville Mennos since the team was first organized 25 years ago. The club is defending champion of the Oshawa City and District Softball League.

Burkholder performed with the



JOSH BURKHOLDER: Stouffville mite member is third generation of his family to play fastball.

world champion Richmond Hill Dynes in 1973. In 1983, he was selected Whitchurch-Stouffville's Sports Personality of the Year.

Burkholder coached minor ball in Stouffville from squirt through midget. Following a one-year sabbatical, he returned as coach Jr. A. During this period, his teams won three Ontario titles.

Although currently battling Parkinson's disease, Burkholder refuses to let this illness deter his enthusiasm for the sport he loves so much.

In addition to playing, Burkholder has had the satisfaction of seeing all three sons participate in the game including Chris, 32, Richard, 30, and Ryan, 27. Ryan currently resides in Waterloo but still plays in tournaments.

"Stouffville has an unbelievable softball history," said Chris, who describes fan support here as being the best in the league.

Chris says he's proud to take part in opening ceremonies with his son and father.

"My father has done so much for softball in Stouffville, it's a privilege to be a part."



The Stouffville Storm squirt boys softball team became the first team representing Stouffville to capture the Ontario Amateur Softball Association provincial A title by defeating Walkerton 5-4 in extra innings for the championship in Peterborough. Team members on the front row (from left) are Robert Kay, Erick Espintu-Santo, Tyler Heffernan, Kohl McVicar, Philip Wood and Aaron Pettifer. In the second row (from left) are Brian Hector, Derek Eickmeier, David Wiseman, Nolan Benoit. In the third row (from left) are Bruce Cringan and Travis Connor. Members of the coaching staff in the back row (from left) are Rob McVicar, Scott Connor, Mike Heffernan, Joanne Cringan, Ted Wood and Rob Santo.

Squirts Storm off with provincial softball crown

Call it a perfect ending to a perfect weekend of play on the diamond for the Stouffville Storm squirt boys softball team.

The Storm became the first team from Stouffville to capture the Ontario Amateur Softball Association squirt A championship after going undefeated at the championships in Peterborough. It won the final with a thrilling 5-4 extra-inning win over Walkerton.

With the score tied at 4-4 through seven regulation innings, Stouffville won the game in the second inning of an international tie breaker.

Starting the inning running from second base, Derek Eickmeier went to third on a single by Phil Wood. Erick Espintu-Santo then drew a walk and advanced to second on a sacrifice bunt by Travis Connor. After Robert Kay drew a walk to load the bases, Nolan

Benoit singled home Eickmeier for the winning run.

Bruce Cringan, who was named most valuable player, tossed a six-hitter for the win.

Espintu-Santo and Cringan each had three hits to pace a 13-hit attack.

Wood, Benoit and Connor each had two and Kay, one.

"The guys worked so hard, they deserved to win," said Storm manager Joanne Cringan.

COMBINE FOR NO-HITTER

In reaching the final, Stouffville received a combined no-hit pitching performance from Cringan and Eickmeier to rout Brantford 8-0.

Tyler Heffernan led the offense, with three hits and three RBIs.

Kohl McVicar collected three hits and one RBI and Benoit, two hits and one RBI.

Facing Walkerton in its sec-

ond game, the Storm rallied for five runs in the bottom of the seventh inning to emerge with a dramatic 8-6 win.

Eickmeier won the game in relief.

The Storm then met Napanee and prevailed 5-2 to gain a berth in the final.

Cringan scattered eight hits to earn the win.

Keying Stouffville to victory were some strong defensive plays. Catcher Brian Hector, picked off a base runner to squelch a third-inning Napanee uprising, while outfielder David Wiseman made a key catch in left field to end the fourth inning.

Kay executed a double play in the third inning and fielded a hard-hit ball by Napanee in the bottom of the seventh to end Napanee's chances.

Heffernan delivered a key hit in the first to score the first two runs of the game.

SAVE UP TO 60%

RAM "FX2"

REG. \$799.99
NOW ONLY \$299.99

MEN'S RIGHT HAND 8-PC SENIOR FLEX
NOW ONLY \$269.99

ETONIC MEN'S GOLF SHOES

Starting \$49.99 at

RAM "ACCUBAR"

MEN'S RIGHT HAND 11-PC. SET, GRAPHITE WOODS
NOW ONLY \$199.99

MAXFLI A10 GOLF BALLS

REG. \$59.99 \$29.99 DOZ.

NIKE

"DOUBLE C" "TOUR" OR "DISTANCE" GOLF BALLS
Reg. \$39.99 NOW \$19.99 DOZ.

CALLAWAY

"VFT HAWKEYE" TITANIUM WOODS DRIVERS & FAIRWAY WOODS
NOW ONLY \$274.99
NEW SHIPMENT

MEN'S "BLAZE ON" 100% COTTON SHORTS

Reg. \$79.99 NOW \$24.99
Black, Tan & Khaki

JUNIOR EQUIPMENT

SINGLE CLUBS.....From \$19.99
GOLF BAGS.....From \$29.99
JR. PULL CARTS.....From \$49.99
5-PC SET, GRAPHITE SHAFTS.....From \$79.99



NEW ADDRESS

DiMarco Golf

8312 McCOWAN RD. www.dimarcogolf.com

CLEARANCE CENTRE

905-479-5077