

SPORTS

Mennos field Ontario crown at intermediate Eliminations

Stouffville men's team off to Eastern Canadian championships in PEI

The Stouffville Mennos will be making an excursion to Summerside, P.E.I., in early September.

While the club members will no doubt do some late-summer sight-seeing, their purpose in travelling out east is to play a little fastball.

Last weekend, the Mennos earned the right to compete in the Eastern Canadian Intermediate A Fastball Championships, Sept. 9 to 11 in Summerside, after capturing the Intermediate A Eliminations in Owen Sound.

It will be the Mennos' first appearance in the Eastern Canadians.

The Mennos ended last weekend's double-knockout tournament with a 5-4 victory over St. Mary's in the deciding game. Both clubs entered the contest with one loss.

The game went down to the wire with the Mennos nursing the 5-4 lead entering the bottom of the seventh inning.

With two outs, St. Mary's loaded the bases before Mennos' relief pitcher Byron Baranieski delivered a rise ball that was called a third strike to end the game and give Stouffville the title.

Scott Evans ignited the Mennos' offence with a home run in the top of the seventh that broke a 3-3 tie. He also collected two doubles.

Brett Boyd and Rick Burkholder, had two hits.

Baranieski pitched 1 2/3 innings and gave up just one run in relief to earn the win.

Evans worked the first four innings for the Mennos and surrendered just one run. Paul Boynton went the next 1 1/3 innings and gave up two runs.

GET GOOD PITCHING

Mennos manager Art Burkholder saw no reason why his club wouldn't be in contention for the title, particularly if its pitching was dominant.

"Any team with Scott Evans and Byron Baranieski on top of their games will have a great chance to win," he said.

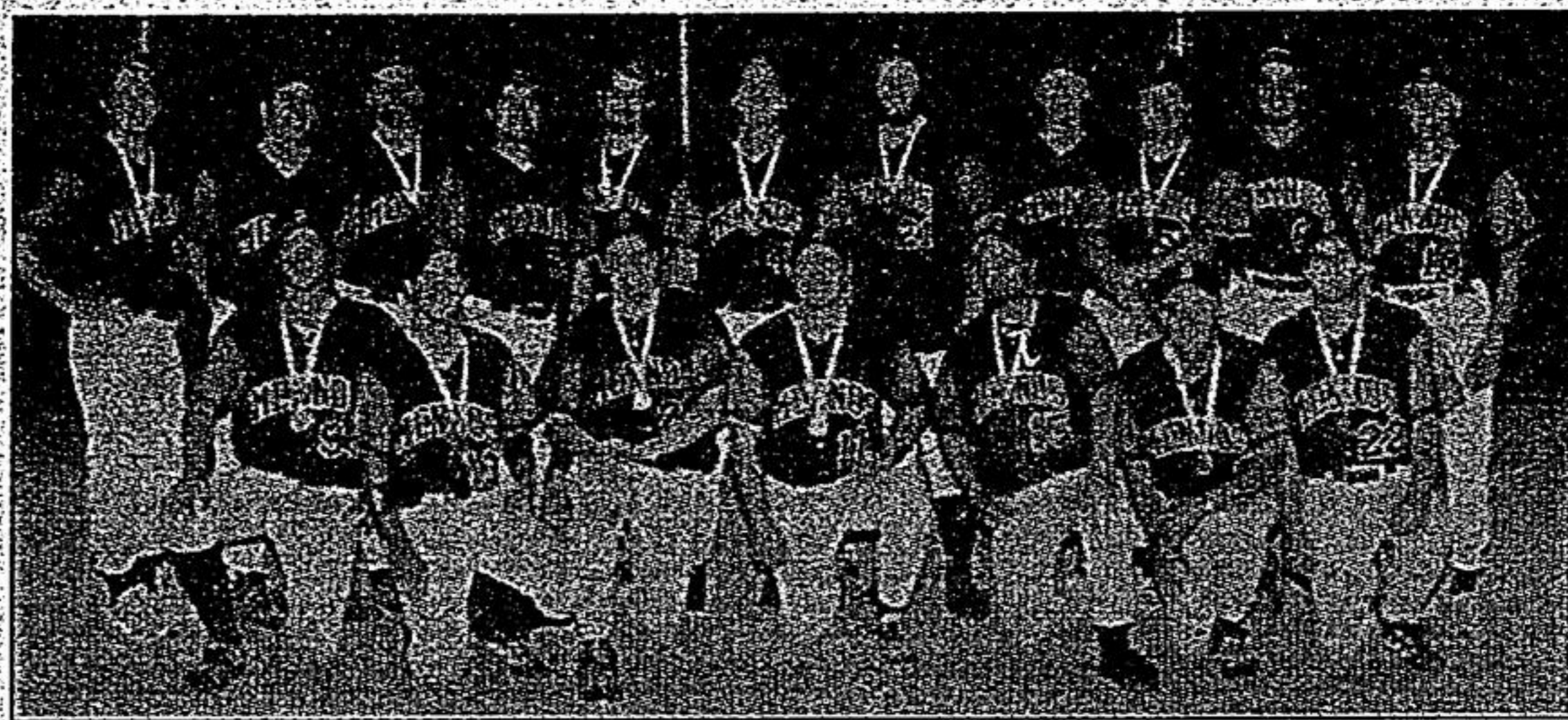
Both pitchers are Whitchurch-Stouffville natives who starred together with the Stouffville Junior Merchants in the early 1990s.

Burkholder was also quick to credit his club's defence.

In their six games the Mennos committed just three errors.

Burkholder praised the work of head coach Howie Burkholder, who moved players in and out of the roster in an effective and timely manner.

"We had players all over the field



The Stouffville Mennos display the gold medals they earned after capturing the Ontario Intermediate A Elimination tournament last weekend in Owen Sound with a 5-4 win over St. Mary's in the deciding game. By winning the event, the Mennos will go to Summerside, P.E.I. to participate in the Eastern Canadian Intermediate A Fastball Championships from Sept. 9 to 11.

making the close plays in key situations," he said.

The Mennos won their opener over Campbellford 7-0.

Chris Burkholder buoyed the Stouffville offence with two hits, including a triple while Evans and Markham Majors pickup Darren Crawford each contributed a triple and Scott Eyre a double.

Facing Sudbury in their second game, the Mennos received a fifth-

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inning, two-run pinch hit homer from Eyre to emerge with a 4-2 win.

Baranieski allowed just one hit in 4 2/3 innings and Joe German, a pickup from the Stouffville Juniors, went the final 2 1/3 innings.

The Mennos then took on Breslau in a game that went down to the wire with Crawford belting a triple in the bottom of the seventh inning that scored Eyre and gave Stouffville a 1-0 win.

Evans tossed a two-hitter and fanned seven batters to earn the win.

With Mother Nature playing havoc with the tournament Saturday, the Mennos met Harriston in a game that concluded Sunday at 2 a.m.

Fortunately for the Mennos, they prevailed 5-2.

EARLY-MORNING WIN

Dan Deeks lashed out a double in the second inning to stake the Mennos to the lead. Eyre contributed a homer in the fourth inning while Chris Burkholder, Evans and Eyre each had hits in the fifth inning to stake the Mennos to a commanding 5-0 lead through five innings.

Evans won his second game of the day.

The Mennos then ran into some formidable pitching from St. Mary's and were limited to just two hits in a heart-breaking 1-0 loss.

Baranieski scattered just six hits, one of which was a fifth-inning homer that decided the contest.

That set the stage for the rematch.

Also contributing to the Mennos' success were pickups Dale Boadway (Stouffville Juniors), Steve Townson (Mount Albert Mudhens) and Ryan Burkholder (Waterloo).

As for how the Mennos might fare at the Eastern Canadians, Art Burkholder said he didn't know much about the opposition other than the fact that St. Mary's will also be competing.

However, he heard that teams from the east coast are traditionally strong.

"The OASA (Ontario Amateur Softball Association) people that we talked with said the eastern teams usually bring some senior players. Nova Scotia, in particular, produces very good fastball players," he said.

WIN TWO IN LEAGUE PLAY

The Mennos tuned up for the tournament by posting two victories in Oshawa City and District Softball League action.

Last Wednesday at Memorial Park, the Mennos doubled the count on the Whitby Eagles 6-3.

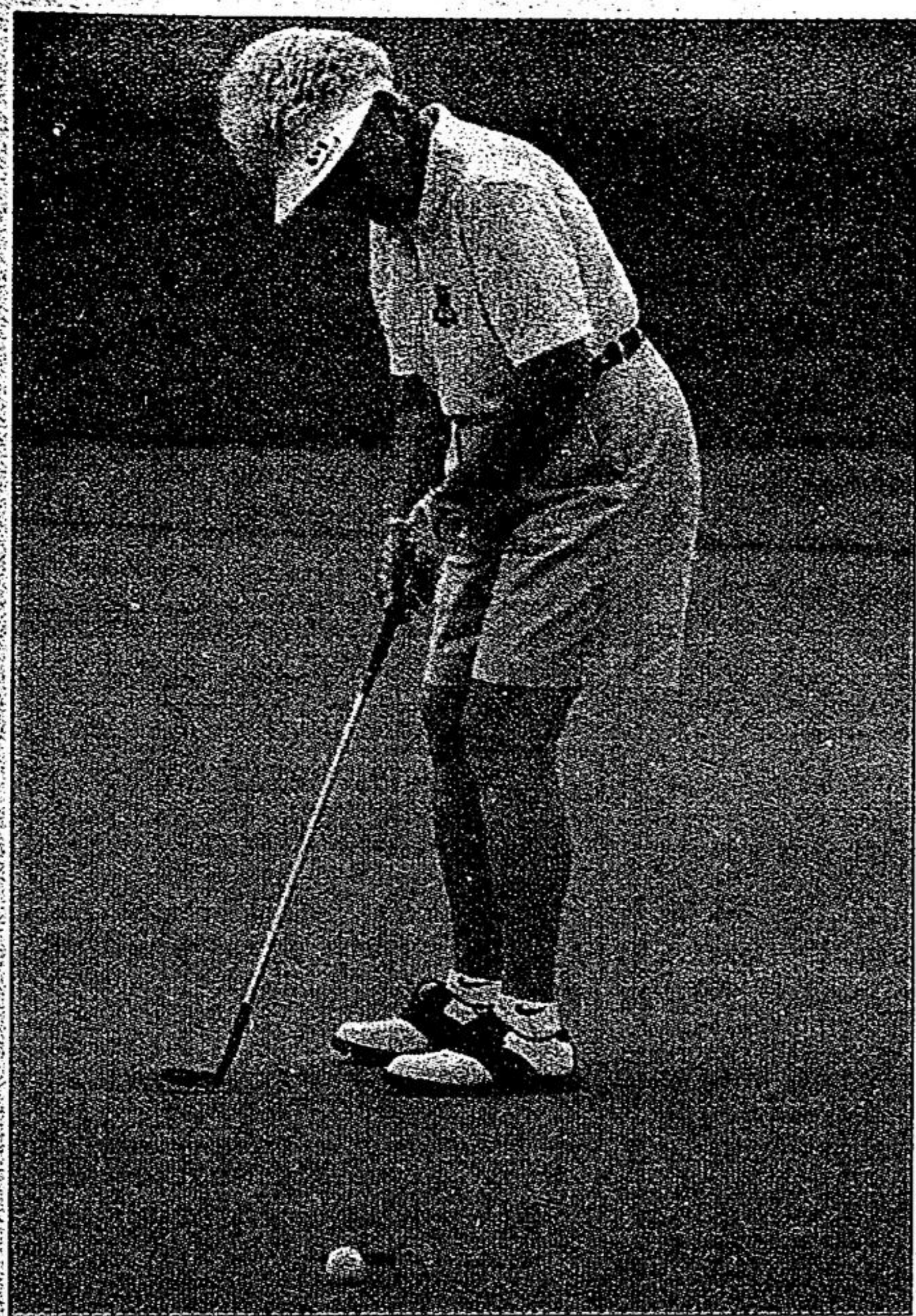
The Mennos scored a run in each of the six innings in which they came to the plate.

Evans had two singles and drove in two runs while Baranieski delivered a triple and single. Eyre, Shawn Boadway and Chris Burkholder each had two singles.

Baranieski tossed three innings of three-hit ball while blanking the Eagles to earn the win.

Last Monday, Evans struck out 12 batters and allowed just three hits in seven innings to propel the Mennos to a 4-2 road win over the Claremont Rebels.

The two victories improved the Mennos' league record to 11-6.



STAFF PHOTO/BILL ROBERTS

Game of inches

Former Whitchurch-Stouffville resident Marlene Streit, now of Unionville, just misses this birdie putt at Spring Lakes Golf and Country Club in Ringwood during last Thursday's final round of the Ontario Ladies Senior Championship. Streit, the defending champion, made par but finished second to Sue Wickware of Pickering after two extra holes.

Conway nets berth on U.S. under-17 team

Neil Conway, a rookie goalkeeper last season with the Stouffville Spirit junior A hockey club, was one of 20 players named to the United States select team that will compete in this month's 2004 Under-17 Five Nationals Tournament in Halle a.d. Salle, Germany.

The U.S. team is comprised of players chosen from the 2004 USA Hockey Select 16 Festival played from June 26 to July 2 in Rochester, N.Y. A native of Concord, Ohio, Conway, 16, led all goaltenders at the festival with a 1.33 goals against average and a .955 save percentage. The event featured the best 1988-born players from across the U.S.

Last season with the Spirit, Conway won 17 games and lost nine and was named the team's rookie of the year. He recorded two shutouts and posted a 3.46 goals against average.

Conway was selected by the Owen Sound Attack in the fourth round of this year's Ontario Hockey League draft.

The U.S. will face teams from the Czech Republic, Germany, Slovakia and Switzerland at the tournament from Aug. 24 to 28.

Last August in Slovakia, the U.S. captured its second straight tourney title with a 3-0-1 record.



NEIL CONWAY: Recorded best record among goalies at 2004 USA Hockey Select 16 Festival.

For more information on the team, log on to www.usahockey.com