

Benoit fields his dream in Ottawa

BY JIM THOMAS
Correspondent

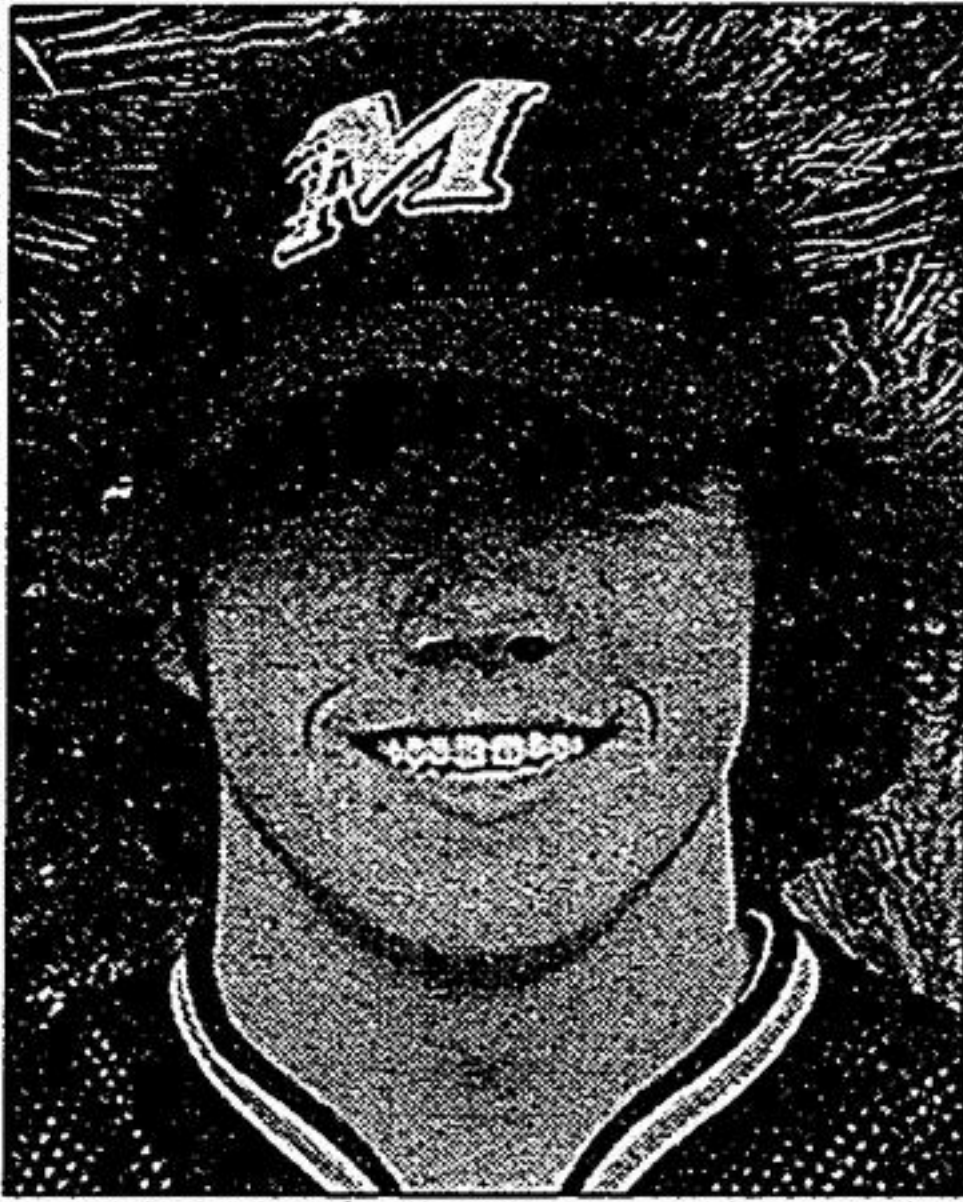
Ask Nolan Benoit what the highlight thus far is in his life and he will give you a response in a New York City second.

For the 15-year-old Stouffville resident it will begin today in Ottawa when he takes part in the 19th annual Ontario Summer Games.

A second baseman and centrefielder with the Markham Mariners major bantam rep baseball club, Benoit was selected by head coach Howard Kidechel, to join a 16-player roster fielded by the defending Summer Games gold medallist York-Simcoe Baseball Association.

Making Benoit's selection to the team even more incredible was that due to a busy personal schedule that includes hockey, where he's auditioning with the Stouffville minor midget Clippers, he was only able to attend one of three Summer Games tryouts held in Vaughan.

But what time the five-foot, five-inch, 138-pound Benoit laboured at the auditions was



NOLAN BENOIT: Credits his time playing fastball in Stouffville in improving his skills in baseball.

enough to convince Kidechel he could help the club. Exhibiting quickness on the basepaths, Benoit is expected to patrol centre field.

"It's an honour," Benoit said of his selection to the York-Simcoe squad. "I'm very excited."

Benoit's baseball roots took hold when he was eight years old as a member of the Stouffville Storm rep fastball team. While with the Storm, Benoit was part a

team that won a provincial championship in 2003 and a silver medal in last year's Eastern Canadian Championships held in Placentia Bay, Nfld.

In addition to playing fastball with the Storm last year, Benoit was a member of the Mariners' baseball team.

This year, however, he's decided to forego fastball in favour of baseball.

But he credited the coaching he received from Mike Heffernan while with the Storm in helping him attain his current plateau.

"It was very disciplined," Benoit said of his time with the Storm.

A graduate of Glad Park Public School in Stouffville, Benoit is presently a Grade 10 student attending Brother Andre Catholic High School in Markham.

While at Brother Andre last academic year, he played baseball and rugby and received the school's Player of the Year award in rugby.

Following high school graduation, Benoit would like to pursue a career in baseball at the university level.

Mann tackles a berth on provincial under-15 rugby team

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA
Staff Writer

Lawson Mann feels honoured to be part of a select group.

The 15-year-old Stouffville resident was one of 24 players chosen to be on the Team Ontario under-15 rugby team.

Playing the inside centre position for this squad, Mann will be in St. John's, Nfld. today to take to the pitch in a two-game exhibition series against the Newfoundland under-16 squad. One of those contests will precede the World Cup match between Canada and the U.S.

"It's really great to be a part of something to represent the entire province," Mann said.

In making the 24-player squad, Mann recalled the initial auditions began in late June when several regional camps were staged and close to 120 players were in attendance. Making the cut from the regional camp he attended, Mann was among 42 players that converged on Fletcher's Field in Markham July 1 for the next step in the trials.

From that camp, the field was whittled to 31 players who then went through another four days of rigorous training at Fletcher's Field.

"We had two days of six-hour practices and another two days of three-hour practices," Mann recalled. "It was an intensive camp."

Entering Grade 10 this fall at Markham District High School and a fly half for the Markham Rugby Football Club's under-16 squad, Mann felt the experience he possessed in playing club ball and in attending a rugby clinic at Camp Olympia when he was 13 years old and was named the Most Improved Player, was a morale booster.

"Judging from what I saw at the camp I knew it would be hard to make the team. But if I tried hard enough I knew I could make it," he said.

In making this team, Mann hopes it will serve as a stepping stone towards making future provincial and national entries.

"To play with the under-16 and under-17 provincial teams is where I'm looking to play down the road and with the under-19 national team," he said. "But to make this team is one of the biggest things I've done in my young career. It's quite an experience."

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HOUSE LEAGUE RESULTS FOR WEEK OF JULY 24
UNDER-12, BOYS: Hamilton Resources Ltd. 5 (Dillon

Wijay 2, Zach Jennings Benjamin Masuda, Jordan Stellinga) vs. The Multiverse 4 (A.J. De Boer 2, Tyler Booth, Andres Jeeger) Hamilton Resources Ltd. 4 (Nolan Blasko 2, Jordan Stellinga, Matthew Espey) vs. Stouffville Family Dentistry 3 (Andrew Muirhead, Kevin Smith, Andrew Baggs) UNDER-12 GIRLS: Timber Creek Golf 4 (Tressa Sheffield 2, Caleigh Stallybrass, Priscilla Glasford)

vs. Charlinda Belgian Chocolates 0; Gallo Real Estate 5 (Amberlynn Beattie 3, Michelle George 2) vs. The Corner House Restaurant 5 (Brittany King 3, Payton Garlough, Lauren Rogers) UNDER-10 GIRLS: Da Classic Scoop 6 (Emily Kaunismaa 3, Kayley Wynne, Heather Lakin, Sarah Storey) vs. Todd Brothers Contracting 1 (Courtney Nairn); Metal Door 4 (Nicole Taylor, Carly Murray, Alyssa Mihail,

Rebecca Empringham) vs. Front Street Capital 3 (Sandra Fancio 2, Haley Catalano); For The Love of Jo Coffee House 4 (Mackenzie Harrington 3, Rebecca Deforest) vs. Gemini Store Fixtures 2 (Shannon McCormick, Victoria Wicks) UNDER-10 BOYS: East Side Mario's 5 (David Dwyer 2, Adam Mortley, Dylan Jacksie, Scott Munro) vs. State Farm Insurance 2 (Joshua Kuettel, Steven Storey);

Rotary Club of Stouffville 7 (Jeremy Hughes 4, Braydon McNeil 2, Sean McSwiggan) vs. Harvey's/Swiss Chalet 3 (Brahms Bennett, Brendan Wilkinson, Erik Tammisto); Richardson Masonic Lodge 11 (Chris Evelyn 4, Kyle Gushue 3, Joe Hutton 2, Braden Clarke, Austin Row) vs. Dr. Jon Barnes Optometrist 3 (Eric Zambini 2, Jason Rankin)

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