

## SPORTS

## Host squirts fall in Ontario final

It would be easy for the Stouffville Storm squirts to feel disappointed after falling 7-4 to Elmira in Sunday's final of the Ontario Amateur Softball Association A double championship at Memorial Park.

"Sure anytime you lose it's disappointing," head coach Scott Eyre said. "But we put ourselves in a position to win that game. We played an Elmira team who we feel we're as good as. If we had played that game two hours before or two hours later we might have won. It's hard to be too upset since we lost to a pretty good team. The boys did everything they could. Being second-best in the province doesn't have a horrible ring to it."

Indeed the Storm did have a chance to lay claim to the coveted title. Trailing 7-2 in their last at bat and with one out, the Storm made it interesting when Matt Morrow got on base with a hit and Nick Robb smashed a two-run homer to cut the deficit to 7-4.

Chris Jupp followed with a triple but was stranded at third base when the game concluded.

"We definitely had a sign of life at the end," Eyre said.

The Storm won its first two games rather handily over Enterprise 14-2 and Napanee 10-2. Facing Elmira in its final round-robin game, the Storm

fell 6-4 to suffer its first loss in the double elimination tournament.

The Storm, however, showed its mettle by rebounding to down Kitchener 13-10 to gain a berth in the final.

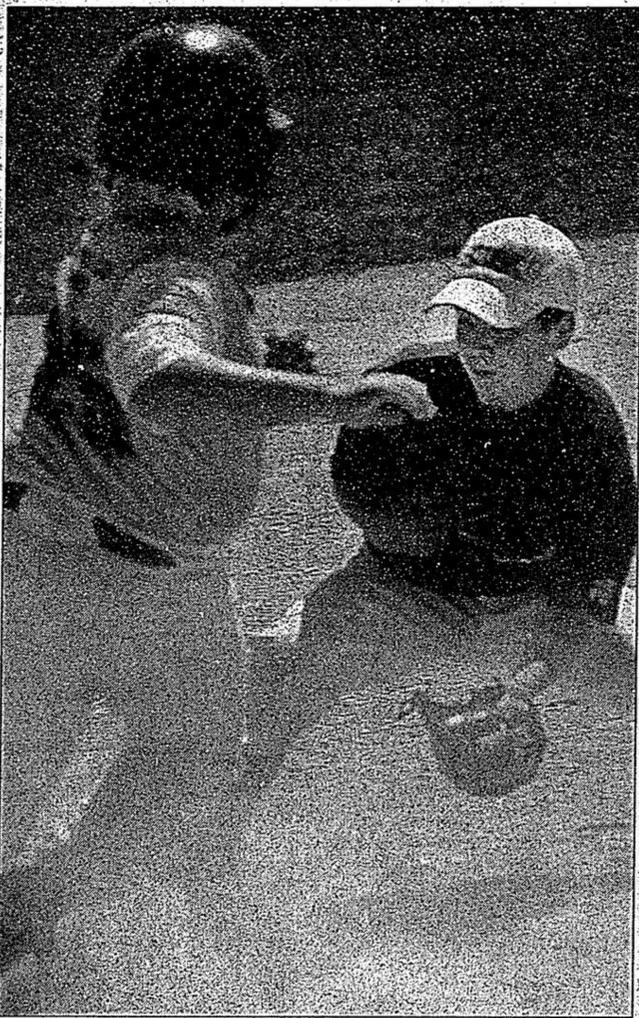
Meeting Elmira for a second time in the tournament, the Storm forced a deciding game with an 11-9 victory.

For the Storm, it marked the first time this season in three attempts they defeated Elmira after losing to them twice during the qualifiers earlier in the year.

Eyre felt that victory gave them a huge boost in morale entering the deciding game.

"I thought our boys responded well to it. I think they kept looking across the diamond that as a team they were as good as them. We knew we could beat them and did it in the first game of the final and we made them sweat in that second game," Eyre said. "I was talking with their coach and he said he didn't take anything for granted when they played us."

While pleased with the overall effort his club put fourth, Eyre was quick to praise the work of several players including the defence provided by middle infielders Spencer Roberts and Matt Dunlop, outfielders Luke Simcoe, Jon Colley, Ben O'Neill and Thomas Reesor, the pitching performances



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEN

Stouffville's Troy Connor makes a late tag on Stone Mills Tyson Kimmel during opening game of Ontario Softball Association squirt tournament in Memorial Park Saturday.

of Morrow and Troy Connor and clutch hitting from Hunter Davidson.

"We were confident the team we had would be a team to beat and the kids got better during the year. I couldn't have been any more proud of them," Eyre said.

The Storm will move into

the peewee ranks next year and think big.

"We will be trying to build a team that can do some damage at the national level. That's exciting for us to think we can break out of the provincial level. We're looking forward to it," he said.

- Mike Hayakawa

## Bantams add provincial title

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA  
Staff Writer

During the last three years, Stouffville Storm head coach Mike Heffernan thought his team had the proverbial monkey on its back after coming up short in their quest for the Ontario Amateur Softball Association A title.

Last weekend in Waterloo, the Storm bantam boys bid farewell to that moniker after defeating the host Hallman Twins 6-3 in the deciding game of the double elimination competition.

"The last time we won the provincials was four years ago as second-year squirts," recalled Heffernan. "In the last three years we've won the eliminations, but always came up short in the provincials. We've been in the hunt for it. This year we did it."

Winning that title didn't come easy for the Storm though.

Forced into a deciding game after losing their first game of the tournament to the Hallman Twins 3-1 early Sunday afternoon, the Storm found themselves training 2-1 through 5 1/2 innings in the second contest.

After Heffernan gave his club some words of wisdom prior to their turn at the plate, the Storm got down to business when Caleb Bayliss singled and scored on a towering two-run homer by second baseman Steven Ashbridge, who had two other hits in the game, to take a 3-2 advantage.

"I've always said to the guys that if we want to be successful this is the year we want to pull this (to win the provincials) off. We wanted to go into the Eastern Canadian championships as provincial champions. It would be a great accomplishment at this age level to pull this off," Heffernan said of his pep talk. "We just tried to get our energy level up more."

Before the inning concluded, the Storm added another run to pad their margin, which they would not relinquish.

Storm pitcher Bruce Cringan made his third start of the tournament and was the winner. Travis Connor, normally a catcher but nursing an injury, came in to earn the save.

While elated to lay claim to the title, Heffernan was quick to praise the effort the Hallman Twins gave his club.

"We were very fortunate. This was a game either team could have won. Waterloo is a good team. I looked at them as one of the most improved teams during the year. They've got good pitching and catching and their defence has improved since we last saw them," Heffernan said.

"With our guys being at this high calibre level they didn't get worried when they were behind. They came at will. They capitalized on other teams mistakes," he said. "But we also got good pitching from Bruce (Cringan) and Caleb (Bayliss). Defensively we were solid and we had lots of timely hits."

The Storm was buoyed by a solo round tripper from Robert Kay and a two-run blast from Ashbridge to rout Newmarket 9-2 in its opener Saturday. Later that day, they edged the Hallman Twins 4-3 and Walkerton Capitals 3-2 to reach the final.

Storm third baseman Brahm VanZeeland delivered a timely hit in the win over the Capitals.

While the Storm had qualified for the upcoming Eastern Canadian championships earlier in the year by winning the provincial qualifier, their achievement in winning the OASA title reinforced their seeding as the top Ontario entry of two they will receive in the Aug. 23-26 event to be played at Torbay, Nfld.

## Del Zotto with national under-18 hockey team

Michael Del Zotto is on the Canadian men's under-18 team playing in the 2007 Memorial of Ivan Hlinka hockey tournament in the Czech Republic and Slovakia this week.

Canada, which lost in a shootout to Sweden Tuesday and played Switzerland Wednesday, plays the Czechs this afternoon. Medal games will be played Saturday.

## SPORTS BRIEFS

Del Zotto is eligible for next June's NHL draft in Ottawa. The 17-year-old Whitchurch-Stouffville resident made

his Ontario Hockey League debut last season with the Oshawa Generals.

The second-overall selection by the Generals in the 2006 OHL draft, the five-foot, 11-inch, 200-pound Del Zotto compiled 10 goals and 47 assists in 64 regular season games last season.

For more, go to: [hockeycanada.ca](http://hockeycanada.ca)

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