

Young softball squad fourth best in Ontario

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Fielding a roster that included just three returning players from last year's team did not appear too promising for the Stouffville Storm mites when they attended the Ontario Amateur Softball Association championships in Port Perry last weekend.

But it did not stop the Storm from winning three of five games and advancing to the bronze-medal game where they settled for a fourth-place finish after falling 8-3 to the Belleville Bandits Sunday.

Storm head coach Dale Wannamaker was encouraged by the manner in which his youthful charges performed.

The key, he said, was in their perseverance and hard work they exhibited throughout the season which became evident during the season-ending tournament.

"Even though finishing fourth does not sound like a lot, our team was certainly the underdog from the start with just three players from 2010. So a fourth-place finish in the province is a great result for our team," Wannamaker said.

The Storm opened the tournament by routing the Napanee Express 11-0 in a mercy-shortened outing.

The tone of the game was set early when Jesse Austin and Christian Drikos drew walks and subsequently scored on a single by Lucas Fasullo.

With Fasullo thrown out at second in trying to stretch the single into a double, Peter Karanopoulos singled while Ben Veitch and Caleb Wannamaker were hit by pitches.

Ethan Harela followed and lashed a three-run triple to stake the Storm to a 5-0 lead.

The Express could not recov-

er with Wannamaker tossing five shutout innings, allowing only three hits, walking one and striking out six to earn the win.

'...our team was certainly the underdog from the start with just three players from 2010.'

Facing Micksburg in their second outing, the Storm broke open a close game with seven unanswered runs en route to an 8-1 win.

With the score tied at 1-1 through four innings, the Storm uprising began in the fifth when Harela and David Griffith drew walks and Ben Eizenga was hit by a pitch.

Jordan Ianuzziello then belted a grand slam home run to stake the Storm to a 5-1 lead.

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Fasullo kept his hitting streak alive by hitting a run-scoring triple while Wannamaker helped his own cause by driving in Fasullo and Karanopoulos.

Pitching seven innings, Wannamaker allowed just nine base runners while striking out 10 to record the win.

After being mercied by the Belmore Sting in their third game of the day, the Storm rebounded to defeat host Port Perry Power 9-8 Saturday evening and gain entry into Sunday's third-place game.

Trailing 3-0 entering the second inning, the Storm rallied when Fasullo drew a walk and three straight singles by Karanopoulos, Veitch and Wannamaker loaded the bases.

Harela clubbed his second three-run triple of the day to give the Storm a 4-3 advantage.

The run parade was not over yet, with Matthew Grimaldi grounding out on a fielder's choice that cashed in Griffith.

Austin then drew a two-out, bases loaded walk to round out a six-run second inning.

The game's momentum saw over the course of the next four innings only to see the Storm hold off a seventh-inning Port Perry charge.

Wannamaker fanned nine batters, walked four over another complete seven-inning game to earn the win.

Also contributing to the club's successful tournament run was Brandon Swire.

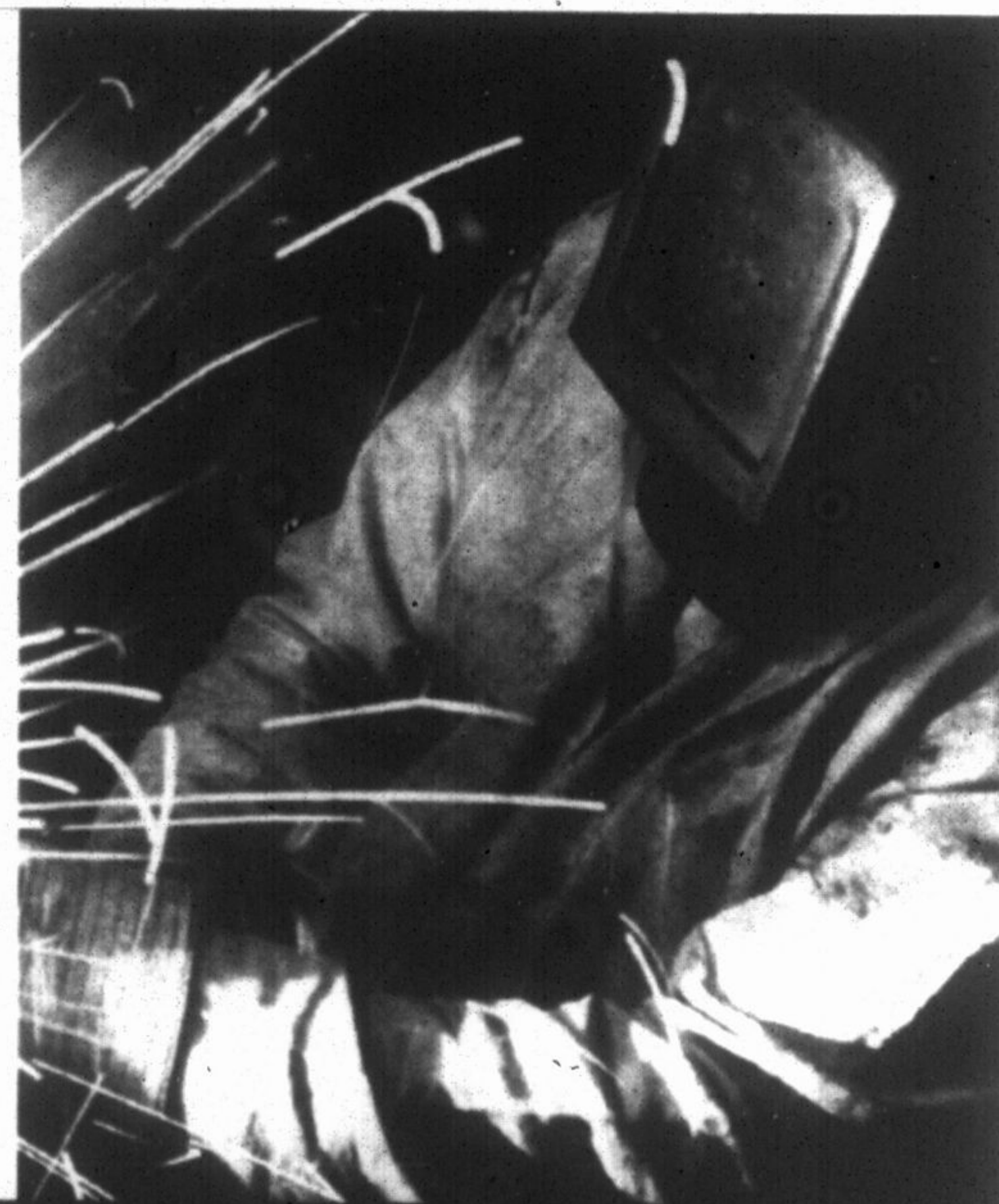
Assisting Wannamaker on the bench were Cam Veitch, Nick Grimaldi and Luke Austin.

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