

O.A.S.A. High & Inside

The Official Newsletter of the Ontario Amateur Softball Association

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Minor Committee

The OASA Peewee Eliminations were held on June 25 - 27 in Napanee Ontario with 11 teams participating. The host was ready on Friday with a wonderful facility, the umpires were ready and the teams started playing under sunny skies on Friday evening. Saturday proved to be a very trying day with misty rain greeting us early in the morning. We managed to get 2 sets of games in while the weather did not cooperate at all. The final game of the day was played under very wet conditions but the teams were good sports. We remained under rain delay until 4:30 when we cancelled the games for the day as the diamonds were unplayable. The UIC, Convenors and Host reworked the schedule so that we could play the games on Sunday using 3 diamonds for the early part of the day. We also started very early and luckily Mother Nature cooperated in order for us to complete the tournament. 12 games were played on Sunday with Chepstow winning the Gold, Port Perry earning the Silver and New Hamburg finishing 3rd. The Ron Taylor Pitching Award was presented to Matt Wardrop of Chepstow. The stamina award goes to Port Perry for playing 6 back to back games to get to the final game and forcing the if necessary game.

We would like to thank the players for their sportsmanship and ability to adapt to the weather and schedule changes, the coaches for being so supportive, the umpires and UIC for a great weekend, the host and parks crews for a wonderful facility and ability to get the diamonds ready for play on Sunday and the parents for getting the players to where they needed to be. In the end we were very tired but had a great weekend of fastball. Good luck to Chepstow and Port Perry when they attend the Eastern Canadians in Quebec at the end of August.

Respectfully Submitted
Roy and Christine Patenaude

By George, he's got it

At a time when snow covered the ground and the temperature was well below freezing, George Ryder was at the HSBC Arena in Buffalo this year see his Chicago Blackhawks take on the Sabres.

Fastball was likely the furthest thing from his mind.

That was until the long time player, coach and executive member ran into a familiar face in Larry Lynch.

As the chairman of the prestigious annual Legends of Fastball Classic tournament that runs in Kitchener, Lynch mentioned Ryder's name had come up as possibly the next in a long line of people honored at the event. Despite a resume that could stack up with just about anyone in Ontario for both a player and coach, Ryder wasn't sure what to think.

"He said my name came up as far as being inducted into this tournament, and I thought he was just joking. I thought 'yeah right,' because there's a good list of people inducted to this before," explained Ryder.

But sure enough, in April, the Team Ontario coach got a call from Lynch saying the selection committee needed to take a look at his accomplishments.

This Saturday, they'll be on display, as Ryder becomes part of a group honored at the tournament for their contributions to the game, a list that includes Darren Zack, widely considered one of, if not the best pitcher of all time.

"It's pretty humbling," said the 49-year-old. "It makes you think about a lot of people that helped you along the way ... the Tony Yins and the Rick Courneyeas and Rick Buck. It seems to me it's more about them."

Ryder began playing in his hometown of Delhi at the age of 6. From there he progressed to win Ontario Amateur Softball Association (OASA) Championships playing for Simcoe, Caledonia and finalists for Rockford Yin's in both 1990 and 1994.

Individually he took home a wealth of pitcher of the year awards and tournament MVPs at both men's league and International Softball Congress (ISC) levels and competed at the ISC World Tournament three different times.

"It gave me some lifelong friendships," Ryder said. "I've played all over the eastern United States; I've played in five provinces for tournaments. This game can take you all over the continent, and it's a good game too and if you love it, it goes by fast."

As good as Ryder was on the mound, he has been just as or more so as a coach.

He's taken home a pair of Canadian Junior Men's Championships with Jarvis as well as a fifth and fourth at the Senior Men's Championship with the same group of players. He was also was an assistant when Team Ontario took home gold at the North American Under-19 Championship last season.

Ryder chose a trio of firsts as his most vivid memories.

"Probably as a player, winning our first all-Ontario in Simcoe in '79. They were all kids that we grew up together with," he explained.

"As far as a coach, winning with Team Ontario was pretty sweet, and probably winning the first midget elimination tournament with (Waterford head coach) Rick (Courneyea). Our team really played well that week. I don't want to say they overachieved, but everything was clicking."

Ryder sits on a number of executives and softball committees, and currently serves as the OASA vice president. He's been to Ontario and Canadian softball symposiums, and appears to enjoy coaching and scouting players for Team Ontario as much as playing.

"He could bring the kids along and get things out of them they didn't know they had in them," said Courneyea. "He was never negative, never got down on the kids -- he was always positive."

"He got respect from the kids . . . You could watch things he would work on and drills we would do and the kids would bring that to a game -that's why we were successful."

Having led many of the current ISC's number two-ranked Jarvis Travelers -- who will compete in this weekend's tournament -- to some very enjoyable spots, Ryder knows what it would mean for the team to bring home a world title.

"I think it would just be huge for this area," he said. "Every one of those kids -the core of those players, I will not only say they're quality players, but they're quality people as well."

Ryder's wife Jayne, father and mother and a handful of teammates including Courneyea will be on hand at Peter Hallman Ball Yard in Kitchener during the festivities. What they won't be watching is the end of a career, more like the start of the fifth inning.

"I've got a ways to go on this journey yet, there are things I want to do in the game," said Ryder.

"I'm just a face that's going to accept the trophy, but to me, it's not about me doing all of this, it's about all of them too, (but) the pitcher always gets all the credit."

Jacob Robinson

O.A.S.A. CONVENTION

2010 O.A.S.A.

Annual General Meeting

Saturday November 20th

12:30 p.m. Meet and Greet

1:00 p.m. ~ 4:00 p.m. AGM

Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites, Toronto Markham

7095 Woodbine Avenue

For more information, visit our website www.oasa.ca

Convention Chair Paddy Fitzgerald-Nolan

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INSURANCE

O.A.S.A. team insurance is available by selecting the application on the O.A.S.A. website www.oasa.ca or by contacting Ron and Sharon Taylor srtaylor@heydon.com 705-778-2637

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