

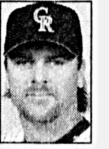
SPORTS



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Larry Walker: The Maple Ridge, B.C. native is off to a great start with the Colorado Rockies. Walker is in a duel with San Diego Padres Tony Gwynn for the National League batting title. Walker is currently hitting .411. **PAGE 10**



Butler earns post with U-18s

by **TED CLARKE**
Citizen Staff

Prince George Cougar coach Stan Butler is going to the Czech Republic. No worries, Cougar fans, he'll be back for with the Cats in time for the '97-98 season.



BUTLER

Butler was selected Friday by Canadian Hockey as an assistant coach for Canada's under-18 national team. The 40-year-old Butler will work with head coach Claude Julien of the Hull Olympiques and assistant Geoff Ward, who coaches the Kitchener Rangers.

"I was just hoping to catch one of the positions with the (under-18) team," said Butler, from his Toronto home.

"Usually with these programs, most people go in at the entry level with the

under-18 program and then if they do a good job they get the opportunity to move up to the world juniors."

In other news, Moncton Wildcats coach Wilf Paiement was picked as head coach of the world junior team. Assisting him will be Detroit Whalers head coach and general manager Peter DeBoer and Red Deer Rebel coach Rick Carriere.

The six coaches were selected from a list of 11 candidates that included Seattle Thunderbirds coach and Prince George native Don Nachbaur.

The under-18 team will be selected by Canadian Hockey director of scouting Barry Trapp. Butler will get his first look at the team when it gathers for training camp in Toronto Aug. 6-10. The team will be in the Czech Republic for a four-team tournament Aug. 11-17.

Butler identified Cougar winger Blair Betts is a potential candidate for the under-18s.

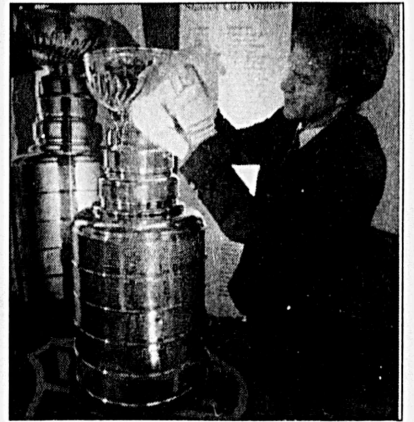
COVER STORY



COUGARS

That will mean Butler will miss the Cougars' summer hockey school, but he said he could hardly refuse such an honor. "I've got the opportunity to represent my country and I think people will respect that," Butler said.

"By going to coach in a tournament like that I think it will make me a better coach. It's good for the Cougar organization. Once again the Cougar name goes all over Canada and it just increases the profile of the organization."



AP photo

Phillip Pritchard, manager of the Hockey Hall of Fame gives the white glove treatment to the Stanley Cup Friday at a Detroit hotel. The Wings could clinch the Cup final tonight in Detroit.

STANLEY CUP

Cup heat choking the Flyers

DETROIT (CP) — Philadelphia coach Terry Murray, making a last-ditch effort to get his team going, suggests that his Flyers are in the process of choking in the Stanley Cup final.

"I don't know where it has gone," he says of the air of confidence the Flyers played with in advancing to the NHL's championship series. "Many teams have been through this problem before and it is basically a choking situation that I call it."

No athlete likes to be called a choke artist. So, it's a psychological ploy that will either so anger his players that they will skate like demons tonight (8 p.m. EDT, CBC) and avoid being swept away by the Detroit Red Wings in the minimum four games, or it will leave Murray alienated from them forever.

It's quite a risk, so, give him credit for taking it. That's how badly he wants to win. "If you stop competing and you are not competing at the level that you know you have to, where you walk into the room and you take a look at your teammates' eyes and you say, 'I did my job, I worked as hard as I could', if that is not happening, you are never going to break through . . . you are going to choke."

They are words of desperation, and they burned the ears of some of Murray's players.

"It's pretty hard to take hearing something like that coming from your coach," said defenceman Eric Desjardins, who along with forward John LeClair won a Cup with Montreal in 1993.

"Um, it's kind of tough to use those words," said LeClair. "You know, we've fought hard at times but we haven't played our best hockey and that's disappointing at this time of year when you don't play your best hockey."

Added Desjardins: "Maybe we're not giving everything we have the right way. There's not one single guy who doesn't want to try but sometimes bad habits develop. You can get away with them sometimes but good teams like Detroit are going to make you pay."

Race leaves Brown hungry for more

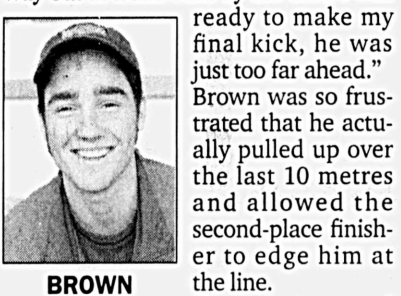
by **BRIAN DREWRY**
Citizen Staff

A little taste of defeat can do wonders for an athlete's motivation. Just ask Brent Brown.

The Kelly Road Secondary School student and Prince George Track and Field Club member was geared up to take the gold medal in the 800m race at last weekend's Provincial High School Track and Field Championships in Coquitlam but some strange strategies by his fellow competitors caught him off guard and he settled for third.

Now, Brown, a Grade 11, has a year to think about what happened and prepare for next year's event, where he'll likely be the favorite considering the top two finishers last weekend were in Grade 12.

"I've never been more frustrated than I was during the last 50m of that race," Brown said after practice Friday at Massey Stadium as he and the rest of the track club tuned up for this weekend's 22nd Annual Spruce Capital Invitational Track and Field Meet. "It was a strange race in that everyone did a slow first lap except one guy who went way out in front. And by the time I was



BROWN

ready to make my final kick, he was just too far ahead." Brown was so frustrated that he actually pulled up over the last 10 metres and allowed the second-place finisher to edge him at the line.

"I was just so mad at myself that it didn't matter where I finished. I wanted to win the race. Anything less didn't matter. But I'll be there next year for sure."

Brown, the three-time defending champion of the Spruce Capital 800m event, was hoping the provincial title would propel him to more success this summer as he has a busy couple of months ahead of him. The 17-year-old heads to Victoria July 4-6 for the provincial juvenile championships and then it's off to St. John's, Nfld. in Au-

gust for a three-day national junior team camp.

"Sure Ryan's a little frustrated right now but he's got a bright future ahead of him," said Prince George Track and Field Club coach Bill Masich. "He's probably the fastest guy at 800m outside the Lower Mainland and he loves to race. He works hard at it. He'll be one of the big dogs next year, that's for sure."

Another local runner expected to shine brightly this weekend is Brown's club mate and long-time friend Ryan Little. The Prince George Secondary

ATHLETICS

School Grade 11 narrowly missed a top-four finish in the 400m hurdle event in Coquitlam, despite taking up hurdles just three weeks prior to the race.

About 450 athletes from as far away as Bella Coola and Leduc, Alberta, are expected at Massey Stadium over the next two days. The invitational meet is also used as trials for the Zone 8 B.C. Summer Games team.

Events get underway both days at 9 a.m.

Simon says OK to future with Jays

by **BRIAN DREWRY**
Citizen Staff

Simon Stoner was one of a handful of Canadians who was not jumping for joy when the Toronto Blue Jays beat the Atlanta Braves to capture the 1992 World Series.



After all, he's been a Braves fan from the day he was born. But Wednesday night his allegiance changed. That was the night the Prince George native was chosen by Toronto in the 36th round of Major League Baseball's 1997 Amateur Draft.

"It would have been great if it was Atlanta, but I'm just happy I got chosen. It's been a life-long dream," said the 17-year-old Central Interior Knights pitcher.

For most of the early part of this year it actually looked like Stoner might be joining baseball's team of the '90s. But just prior to the draft the Jays came calling. "Atlanta showed a lot of interest in me at the beginning so I actually thought I might get picked by them,"

added Stoner, who's graduating this month from Duchess Park Secondary School, where he also had a stellar basketball career. "But in recent weeks the Blue Jays were calling quite often and Wednesday night their scout, Stan Brickowski, called and said they selected me."

The Jays' early plans for the 6-foot-5, 220-pound right-hander, call for him to head south to continue his education and get some top-notch instruction.

"I'm going to go to a junior college in south Florida next year and then they said they'll decide after that whether to offer me a contract and send me to AA or AAA or leave me in school for another year."

"Wherever I go I just want to improve on my game. I want to get my speed up on all my pitches and work on my composure on the mound."

Until then, Stoner will continue to suit up for the Knights and play a few games for the Prince George Grays, including their British Columbia Junior Baseball Association home-opening double-header tonight at 5 p.m. against the Richmond Budgies at Monty Gabriele Park.

'Guts and energy' drive KFC squad

by **TED CLARKE**
Citizen Staff

While her team was handing out a 5-0 thumping on the soccer pitch to Team KFC, Melanie Perrin had a few words of advice for her opponents as they took their lumps.

Have faith, for the tide can quickly change in the Prince George Women's Soccer Association Recreation Division.

"They're exactly like we were at the beginning last year — all guts and energy," said Perrin, a second-year forward for Rec Division-leading Northern Tile.

"They (KFC) just have to keep their spirit up and keep having fun. As long as you enjoy it, the skill will come. That's all that happened to us and we're still having fun."

It was only last season the shoe was on the other foot for Perrin's Northern Tile team. Like KFC, Northern Tile was an expansion team of players new to the league, most of whom had no soccer experience.

KFC has a tough act to follow. It took less than a season for Northern Tile to go from worst to first.

"None of us had ever played when we first started and we ended up winning the summer league," added Perrin, while ducking another sideline attack by the Rotary field mosquito squadron.

"I think they'll be a good team before long and that's why we have to be scared of them."

KFC scored its only goal of the season in the opening game, a 2-1 loss to Northern Tile. Although KFC left winger Theresa Morgen had hoped Wednesday's re-match would result in



Citizen photo by Brent Braaten

Sporting their brand new jerseys, two KFC forwards chase down the Northern Tile ball-carrier during Wednesday's game at Rotary field. The first-year KFC team is learning life is an uphill battle in the Prince George Women's Soccer Association's Recreation Division.

a victory, she says it's only a matter of time.

"We're still trying to learn the basics and we're not too concerned with winning," Morgen said. "We just want a good game."

Added KFC goalie Cari Dabell, one of only four KFC players who had played soccer before this season: "They're learning quickly. Most of them knew each other before and that's helped. There's things we have to work on, but

that's stuff that just comes with practice."

KFC coach Dave Fish has served as a bench boss and soccer executive in both youth and men's soccer. He says coaching a group of newcomers to soccer so intent on learning the game is like a breath of fresh air.

"It's quite different from being totally competitive," said Fish, whose laid-back approach to the game has gone down well with the KFC players.

SOCCER

"You don't have the pressure of dealing with kids and parents."

"It'll be a couple years before they get all the basic skills and really understand the game so they know where to stand to get the ball. But they're all keen to learn and we're getting lots of people out for practices."

Like many of her teammates, this is KFC forward Val Delorme's first venture into organized team sports.

"I wanted to play just because I wasn't doing enough athletically in the summertime," said the 25-year-old Delorme.

"I played soccer in high school gym class but that doesn't really count. The running is not too bad, but I thought I was in better shape than I am."

"It would be better if we scored more goals, but it's really fun. Even though we lose, everyone leaves the game pretty pumped."

There are now five teams in both the Rec and Competitive divisions. Most of the growth in the PGWSA the past few years has been at the rec level. The reason, according to Perrin's twin sister and Northern Tile scoring leader Rhea Perrin, is more and more women are discovering they don't need to be super athletes to play the game.

"A lot of people are intimidated by soccer because it's truly an athletic sport, but it's been a lot more fun than I anticipated," Rhea said. "I think the only one concerned about the rules is the ref. It's real easy to pick up on."

"As long as we have a big team with lots of subs then everyone, athletic or not, can still have the chance to have a bit of fun."

MINUTE DRILL

SCORECARD

BASEBALL

American League
Cleveland 7 Boston 3
Seattle 6 Detroit 3
N.Y. Yankees 6 Milwaukee 3
Toronto 4 Oakland 1
Minnesota 9 Anaheim 7
Chicago 7 Baltimore 3
Kansas City 2 Texas 1

National League
Montreal 3 Chicago 0
Pittsburgh 5 Philadelphia 4 (10)
Cincinnati 5 N.Y. Mets 2
Florida at Colorado (ppd. rain)
St. Louis 3 Los Angeles 1
Houston 8 San Diego 7
Atlanta 9 San Francisco 5

BASKETBALL

NBA final
Utah 104 Chicago 93

HORSES



AP photo

Silver Charm, winner of the Kentucky Derby and Preakness, will be the Triple Crown winner if he takes today's Belmont Stakes.

Silver Charm solid bet

NEW YORK (AP) — Florida grey colt Silver Charm is 1.5 miles from the highest rung in American horse racing.

The colt can join such racing royalty as Citation, Secretariat and Affirmed by winning the Belmont Stakes today (1:30 p.m. PDT, CTV) and becoming the 12th Triple Crown winner.

"He's just an average guy, who made it to the top," trainer Bob Baffert said of the Kentucky Derby and Preakness winner. "He's come from humble beginnings."

LACROSSE

Posse after Kodiaks

by **Citizen Staff**

Dave Jenkins has a word of warning to the Kelowna Kodiaks intermediate lacrosse team.

If you think you've seen the best the Prince George Heather Sadler Jenkins Posse can throw at you, think again.

You ain't seen nothing yet. The Posse had a few key players missing from the lineup for recent games against Kelowna and Kamloops last month, but still managed to sweep their intermediate opponents to improve their provincial record to 6-0.

This time around, with the Kodiaks in town for a two-game series tonight and Sunday at the Coliseum, they'll have to contend with a full-strength Posse.

The Posse played in the national junior B Founder's Cup tournament last year and this year will enter the fray amongst B.C.'s best 17- and 18-year-olds in the provincial intermediate A division tournament.

"We did very well at the Founders' Cup and that's why I think we'll be strong at the provincial A playdowns," added Jenkins. "I think we'll fool a lot of people. We may not win it, but we'll be competitive."

Jenkins said fans of fast, rough-and-tough lacrosse action should come out to witness the two-game grudge match against the Kodiaks, set for Saturday night at 6 and Sunday morning at 10 at the Coliseum.

The Kodiaks have strengthened their line-up with a few junior-aged players and Jenkins expects a tougher test.

"Kelowna has two or three very good ball players, but I don't think they move the ball anywhere near as good as us," Jenkins said. "They're a rough team. We had a volatile situation when we played them a month ago and it could happen again. We don't exactly have a bunch of shrinking violets ourselves."