

Cold Springs Cats History

1975 - 2004



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Pre-Cats (1973)

Where the h--- is Cold Springs? That was a common question people asked about our ball team in the 80's and 90's, especially when we traveled out of province. However, in the 60's and early 70's everyone usually played for their own team in Cobourg or Port Hope, or their village such as Bewdley, Harwood, Baltimore, Plainville, or Cold Springs. Therefore, everyone knew everyone else who played softball. And there were several local leagues in which to participate, such as the Port Hope Town League, Cobourg Town League, Haldimand League, Cobourg Industrial League, and of course the Hamilton Township League. All the leagues were well organized and highly entertaining, as witnessed by the huge crowds at playoff time, when I've seen the parks in places such as Cold Springs and Plainville packed with exuberant fans.

The executive of each league controlled the player eligibility of each locale as well. For example, in the Hamilton Township League for several years, we were only allowed two imports. An import, at that time, might come all the way from Cobourg, Port Hope, or a different township.

After participating in the Hamilton Township League for a number of years, the team decided to go one step further and try OASA Championship play. We chose a few pickups from the Hamilton Township in order to participate in the OASA Men's C playdowns, and we were fairly successful.

Even though the township league was great locally, we realized that in order to meet good playmanship every night, we should proceed to another league, perhaps the Peterborough City League. Nevertheless, there were several key questions about the change.

Another key query that has been asked is "How did the name Cats originate?" In the mid-seventies, Keith Ferguson, who followed our team as his brother Ivan played with us, was continually cheering us on by shouting, "Let's go Cats!" This title permeated throughout the years for Cold Springs.

Cats History (1975-2004)

Is this team competitive enough to enter our league? This was the question that the executive officers of the Peterborough City League asked Ross and I when we attended their inaugural meeting in the winter of '74-'75. We certainly proved that we were competitive enough because we finished in first place in the league that summer, and also won the OASA Intermediate C title on a bitter October weekend in Capreol.

Thus, the Cats came into existence in 1975, but little did we know that we would continue in the great game of fastball for approximately the next 30 years.

The nucleus of the Cats in 1975 hailed from Cold Springs and other areas of Hamilton Township. It included John Maughan, Harold Lang, Ivan Ferguson, Jeff Timlin, Lorne Jamieson, Ewart Timlin, Lynn Thackeray, John Cane, Bill Cane, Don McDonald, Paul Hasson, Jim Bradford, Roger Cole, Ray Bickle and Allan Burnham. Doug Alderson and Craig Gray acted as coaches while Ivan West served as manager.

1976

In 1976 the Cats participated in a new league called the Eastern Ontario Fastball League. Along with Cold Springs it included teams from Belleville, Trenton, Picton, Brighton, Campbellford, Cobourg, and Peterborough. The Springs played well and earned a first place finish. However, in league play-offs the team was defeated by Belleville Devolins. Nevertheless, we successfully defended our Intermediate C crown by defeating teams from Brighton, Campbellford, Elgin, Port Elgin, and finally Capreol.

1977

The Cats had a poor year participation-wise. We finished in fourth position in the E.O.F.L. and were knocked out of provincial play-downs by Campbellford.

1978

There was new hope and several new faces in our line-up in 1978. Additions to our roster included Mike McIvor, Ed Ristan, Phil Krauter, Neil Francis, Marty Kernaghan, Bill Ryan, Roger McIntosh and Terry Irwin. Jim Chase was our new coach replacing Bill Rollings, who acted in this capacity in 1976 and 1977. Ewart Timlin served as manager again. In the E.O.F.L. not only were we pennant winners but also play-off champions. In Intermediate B play-offs we conquered Braeside (near Pembroke) and Bradford. Nevertheless, in a close series, the Cats were eliminated by Port Elgin.

1979

This was our final year in the E.O.F. L. as the league folded that fall. New players included the following: Bill Elliott, Don Elliott, Roger Alexander, Rick Palmateer, Jim Flesch, Terry Lewis, and Barry Dawe. Jim Chase again acted as coach and Ewart Timlin as manager. Our fortunes seemed to rise this season and we finished in first place. Unfortunately, the Cats were defeated in league play-offs and Ontario play-downs by Picton who went on to become Ontario Champions.

1980

In 1980, we participated, for the first time, in the Oshawa City and District League. In order to strengthen our team for senior play-offs we added several new players. They included Don and Jim Burkitt, Stephen Mitts and Paul Goodfellow. The Oshawa City and District League included teams from Oshawa, Whitby, Stouffville, and of course, Cold Springs. We were successful in finishing in first place during the regular season but were eliminated in play-offs by Oshawa Merchants.

In the Senior A Ontario Eliminations in London, twenty six teams competed for the Gold Medal. The Cats defeated Toronto Fred's Sports 2-0, Sault Ste. Marie 1-0, Sarnia Gils 3-2, Oshawa Motor Carriers 3-0, and in the final game, Sarnia Gils 3-0. Mike McIvor was declared the Most Valuable Player when he hit three home runs during the tournament. Roger Cole and Jim Burkitt shared the pitching duties. They had only two runs scored on them during the tournament and they were both unearned.

In being declared the Sr. A Champions, the Cats earned the right to represent Ontario in the Canadian National Softball Championship in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. To reinforce our roster we added a powerful hitting pitcher – Steve Virag from London and brutal batter Phil Solomon from Oshawa.

In Saskatoon the Cats did themselves, their fans and Ontario proud. We finished with a 4-2 record in the national event. No team won more games in the preliminary round than Cold Springs. Six clubs had 3-1 credentials and the tie had to be broken by comparing the runs for and against differential. Winnipeg earned first place with a plus 9 and Cold Springs had a plus 5 for a fifth place finish. *Cats were the only team in the entire tournament to beat the eventual Canadian Champions from Nova Scotia.* They nipped Elks, 2-1, in an extra inning on Friday in their final game of the preliminary round. The irony of the situation was it cost Cats to be the home team in this case. Two men were on base when Al Burnham cracked a double in the bottom of the eighth inning and both would have scored had the game not been over as soon as the first runner (Terry Lewis) crossed the plate with the winning run. If the Cats had been the visitors, both runs would have counted, elevating them into the top four in the standings. That would have qualified Cold Springs for the double knockout elimination round rather than the single knockout section.

It should also be noted that Cold Springs also beat the silver medal team in the preliminary round. The Cats faced the legendary Gene McWillie from Saskatoon All-O-Matics, representing Saskatchewan, and tagged him with the defeat.

In all the games played in the Nationals, the Springs finished No. 1 in defensive play. However, our hitting was suspect and we finished 8th in this category.

Cold Springs felt the loss of Paul Goodfellow early in the tournament when a base runner collided with him and cracked his ribs.

Bill Elliott got a standing ovation from the crowd on his last trip to bat.

What an amazing year!

1981

During 1981, we played for our last time in the Oshawa City and District League. Additions to our line-up included Dave Ruthowsky, Bryan Madge and Doug Christie. We attained the league pennant and play-off championship this year. In the Ontario Sr. B Play downs we were eliminated by the host club Sault Ste. Marie.

1982

In 1982 Cats took a major step and joined the Ontario Fastball League (OFL). In the league itself we did very well for a rookie team and finished in 3rd place. During playoff competition, the Cats eliminated Owen Sound (led by pitcher Brad Underwood) but in turn were defeated by Agincourt (pitcher Jim Cowdrey), who were the Ontario Sr. A Champions for 1982.

1983

Cats moved up to second spot in the OFL in a problem-plagued 1983 and pushed Agincourt to the very limit in playoffs to lose by a single run in the final game.

1984

In 1984, the Cold Springs Cats team folded and consequently several members - namely John Maughan, Ivan Ferguson, Gary Vowles, Harold Lang and I - joined the Cobourg's Bruce and Rick's OASA Intermediate B squad (Other members such as Pete Harrison, Dave Ruthowsky, Paul Marineau, and Roger Cole joined Tex's Rangers as a Senior B squad). In the OASA Championship game Trenton defeated Bruce and Rick's with Jim Burkitt, another ex-Cat, the victorious pitcher.

1985

After a one-year hiatus in 1984, life was rekindled in 1985, when the Cold Springs Cats elected to return to the Oshawa City Softball League rather than return to the shaky Ontario Fastball League. Cats, who once upon a time belonged to the Oshawa group, participated in a league comprised of Oshawa Copperfields, Port Perry, Whitby, Durham Merchants, and Oshawa Juniors.

Playing for the Senior B Cats that year were Bill Elliott, Perry Bowles, Brian Condon, Roger Cole, Wayne Wells, Stephen Mitts, Gary Hope, Terry Bowles, Jeff Timlin, John Maughan, Mike McIvor, Paul Marineau, Marvin Moore, Ray Bickle, John MacDonald and Peter Harrison.

In 1985 the Cats signed their second "King" when they acquired National Hockey League star Bernie Nicholls. Nicholls, who played for the Los Angeles Kings, added a great deal of flair and depth to the shortstop position. At Kemptville, during the Senior A Eliminations, I offered to pay Bernie for his hotel reservations, along with the other players. Bernie replied nonchalantly, "That's okay E.T.; I sleep in a pup tent."

1986, 1987

In 1986 and 1987 the Cats were mainly a tournament team. They were quite successful in winning the annual tournaments in Hastings and Port Perry. However, in 1986, in the Intermediate B Championship tournament in Mitchell and in the Intermediate A tournament in Norwich the following year, the club achieved limited success.

1988

The executive of our team decided to host the OASA Intermediate A Championship tournament in Baltimore in the summer of 1988. After a great deal of planning, the weekend tourney was blessed with super weather and fine fastball involving eight teams from North Bay to Caledonia. Nevertheless, the Cats finished with a 2 and 2 record, but acquired loads of great memories in off-the-field activities.

1989

The Cold Springs Cats, who started the eighties by dropping a bombshell in winning the Ontario Senior Elimination Tournament, finished the decade with another startling explosion in North Fredricksburgh in September, by claiming the 1989 OASA Men's B Championship title. Cats surprised everyone, including themselves, by scratching and clawing all their worth to reel off four straight wins in the eight-team, double knockout tournament and become all-Ontario title holders.

En route to earning the area's first ever Men's B title, Cats blanked Wahnepotae 5-0 and nipped Petrolia Squire Tavern 4-3 in 10 innings on Saturday, shaded Kirkland Lake Federal Tavern 1-0 in two extra innings Sunday morning, and then climaxed the weekend with a 2-0 verdict over the same Kirkland Lake team in the afternoon final.

The Cats now claim to having won provincial crowns in three different categories in our history: Men's C in 1975 and '76, Senior A in 1980, and Men's B in 1989. Roger Cole, John Maughan, GM Ewart Timlin, and director Ross Timlin are the only four men to have been part of all four of these Ontario championships by Cold Springs.

Veteran pitcher Roger Cole, named the Most Valuable Player in the tournament, said that he'd never before played on a team where there were no dominant figures and where all of the players had pitched in to contribute something significant to the cause. In his estimation, Cats performed as well as they possibly could as a team to make the fantasy come true.

1990-1995

From 1990 until 1992 the Cats played in a number of fastball tournaments. Although there was a great deal of camaraderie and good fellowship during those years, the executive decided it was time to take a break from the competitive softball world. Consequently the team folded for three years.

In 1993 until 1995, ex-Cats such as Roger Cole, Ron Herriott, and GM Ewart Timlin joined the Baltimore Rockets fastball club. During 1994, the Rockets were finalists in Chelmsford in the Intermediate A category. Then in 1995, the team progressed to the OASA Men's Championship title in Sturgeon Falls.

1996

In the winter of 1995-96, I had the opportunity to become a member of the OASA Men's Committee. It was an entertaining and certainly rewarding experience in the fact that a new OASA category was formed. That was, of course, the creation of the Masters level in fastball, for players who had achieved a certain maturity in physical and mental outlook in this great game.

Thus, the Cats were reunited in 1996, which prolonged the interest in the sport for several years. Eleven of the former Senior A champions who represented Ontario in the Nationals were involved in the new, mature Masters club. The members were: Roger Cole, Bill Elliott, Ray Bickle, Don Elliott, Barry Dawe, John Maughan, Stephen Mitts, Paul Goodfellow, Mike McIvor, Ross Timlin, and Ewart Timlin. Other key elements of that '96 team included Gary Latchford, Dan Donahue, Dave Ruthowsky, Jeff Timlin, Mike O'Hearn, Tim Neron, John Cane, Harold Lang, Pete Harrison, and coach Steve Nealy.

In the '96 OASA Masters Championship in St. Thomas, the Cats opened up with a 5-0 win over St. Thomas Rusty Spikes as Roger Cole threw a nifty two-hitter. In their next start they came from behind with four runs in the sixth to take a 7-3 verdict from the Toronto Force. Lefty Gary Latchford gave up only four hits to record the win. In the final, these same two teams hooked up again, with Cold Springs taking a 9-3 decision. Dave Ruthowsky was the winning hurler. Cold Springs carried the OASA banner north over the Labour Day weekend as they traveled to North Bay and won the prestigious 32 team World Old-Timers Tournament.

1997

During the winter of 1996-97, Harry Jeschke and I planned to make history in the fastball world by hosting the first ever Canadian Amateur Softball Association Masters Championship at Cobourg's newly opened Legion Fields. What fantastic facilities to showcase the event!

After planning the championship series over the course of several months, the tournament finally came to fruition in August, but it involved several problems in the beginning stages, which I will outline after I discuss the OASA Masters Championship.

The Ontario Masters was also staged in Cobourg during July of 1997, when eleven teams answered the call. As defending provincial champions, the Cats already owned a berth in the upcoming Nationals. But rather than accepting the free pass, our team chose to walk through the front door, winning five straight games and taking the first of three qualifying spots.

In the first game of the Ontario's we managed to beat Toronto's Chick 'n Deli 8-5 in 10 innings, followed by wins over Scarborough 4-2, Mississauga Masters 11-3 in a mercy game, 10-2 over Wellesly/Wilmot in a mercy game, and 11-5 over Wellesly in the final game. All three finalists qualified to compete in the Nationals. Also competing in 1997 were teams from Grafton, Trenton, Ottawa, Etobicoke, Toronto, Scarborough, North Bay, and a second team from Mississauga.

Roger Cole was the obvious choice for the Top Pitcher award at the Masters tournament in July.

As I stated earlier, in August there were some problems in the scheduling of the Nationals. Just two days before the largest ball tournament ever held in Cobourg, Harry Jeschke was informed by a telephone call that a second team from Nova Scotia – namely Sydney – was on its way to the Canadians. Due to a mix-up, Harry had not been told earlier. Needless to say, Mr. Jeschke scrambled to accommodate the Sydney team into the schedule. This left the tourney with an odd number of teams. Therefore he added Cobourg Thomas Pontiac to increase the entries to ten.

Also, due to inclement weather, some of the games had to be re-routed to Baltimore where there were well-drained diamonds.

Branch 133 of the Royal Canadian Legion in Cobourg was an enormous aid in 1997 as they provided the facilities, food and refreshments for our welcoming party on a wet Wednesday evening in August. All the participants from British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, as well as officials and local dignitaries were entertained by the Cold Springs Cats and their wives. This set a positive tone for the whole tournament.

The Cold Springs Cats won seven consecutive games and captured the First Canadian Masters Fastpitch Championship at Cobourg in '97, in the inaugural event. What a fantastic ending for the final game! I couldn't have written a better script for the dramatic action packed conclusion.

The Cats won four in a row in pool play as they handled Sydney, N.S. 8-1 and mercied Bass River, N.B. 7-0. Their third and fourth wins were by 7-1 scores over Manitoba and Mississauga. Advancing to the playoff round, the Cats dropped Wellesly, the same club they downed to win the Ontario title. Roger Cole recorded the victory.

Cold Springs went into the next playoff match with Halifax, N.S. and edged the maritime crew 3-2. Dave Ruthowsky held Halifax to just five hits, although he gave up a 2-run homer in the first. Nevertheless, the Cats clawed back with three runs in innings 1, 2 and 6.

In the exciting final, Cold Springs were leading 2-1 going into the bottom of the seventh against Victoria Payless. With one away and a runner on first base, B.C.'s Victor Malli slammed a double to right-centre. Tim Neron fielded the ball

and relayed it to second baseman Stephen Mitts, who in turn fired it to catcher Bill Elliott, who tagged the oncoming runner and threw to Harold Lang at third who tagged Malli for the game-ending out. In that championship game Terry Lewis went the distance for the winner. Mike McIvor drove in both runs.

Ray Bickle was named the tourney's Top Hitter – he hit .700 plus in the round robin and then kept on the playoffs, finishing with a .583 mark. Mike McIvor, by the way, had three home runs and went 10 for 24, and he also drove in eight runs. The Cats batted .333 for the tournament.

Terry Lewis was named the Top Pitcher of the event as he allowed just two earned runs in 14 innings. The strong three man staff of Lewis, Ruthowsky, and Cole allowed just nine earned runs in 46 innings for an ERA of 1.37.

Even though we battled rain and unexpected teams at the beginning of the week, we felt that the tournament was a fantastic success for not only the Cats but also the throngs of fans who attended the inaugural event.

However, we weren't exactly perfect in '97 as we attempted to retain the World Old-Timer title we won in '96. With a small crew of twelve we lost in the final game in North Bay to Total Cleaning and Restoration in two extra innings. Bill Jacko was the winner while Dave Ruthowsky took the loss. Roger Cole had a two-run double for the Cats.

1998

In 1998 the Cats recorded our third straight Masters Elimination Championship, the tournament for which was held in Mitchell. This qualified us to defend our Canadian title in St. John, N.B.. We didn't have the easy road that we traveled in 1997, as we had to come from the loser's bracket to challenge for the OASA crown. The Cats won our first two games 12-4 over Kitchener-Waterloo and 13-6 over Mitchell before being nosed out by Scarborough 1-0.

In the final, the Cold Springs Club had to win to survive and we came up with a 2-1 victory over the Scarborough Blues and then won the sudden death rematch 7-0 to emerge as champions for the third consecutive year.

Cold Springs (as defending champions), Scarborough, Sarnia, and Mitchell all qualified for the Canadian Masters Championship in New Brunswick.

Bill "Cowboy" Elliott has always been a great catcher and cheerleader for the team. However, in 1998 he particularly shone as a fundraiser. Bill began the year by staging a 29-table euchre tournament in February, helped organize our first annual golf tournament in May, staged a yard sale, meat roll and raffles in the summer. As a result of his efforts, sufficient money was raised to pay for all the room reservations at the gorgeous Delta Brunswick Hotel in St. John, N.B. at the Nationals. What a year we had!

The Cold Springs Cats won their second Canadian Masters Fastpitch Championship in a row, but it was far from a cakewalk. In the Nationals at St. John, Cold Springs took top spot, followed by Mitchell, with Sarnia third and St. John Whistle Shop placing fourth.

In the round robin series the Cats lost their opener 4-1 to Nova Scotia's Captain Eli's. They came back to take their next four games to win the Spalding Division. The Cats blitzed Sarnia 12-1, beat York Sunbury Minglers 4-1, and blanked Dairy Queen 7-0 with Landers fanning a dozen and giving up only two hits. They took the division title with an 8-0 win over Bass River, N.B. as Roger Cole gave up only one hit.

The Cats opened up the playoff round the same way they opened the round robin set – with a loss. Labatts Division winner Mitchell came up with a 4-2 decision. That win threw Mitchell into the final and Cold Springs against Sarnia in the semis.

In the semi-finals, the Cold Springs crew nipped Sarnia 2-0 as Dave Ruthowsky fired a one-hitter. In the final the Cats blanked Mitchell 7-0 with 50 year-old Canadian Softball Hall of Famer Pete Landers tossing a neat no-hitter, fanning ten and walking just one man.

In '98 we had a plethora of splendid pitchers and great swatters as well. However, we needed every one to capture our second Canadian Masters Championship. The question at that time was, can we make it three in a row? Little did we know then that there would be no more Canadians staged at the Masters level. The Cats had won the title in '97 and '98 – the only years this championship has ever been held. Therefore, some type of historical softball record has been set by our team.

To conclude our successful activities in '98, Barry Dawe once again organized a golf tournament at Ashbrook in September, followed by a year-end party at E.T.'s. We certainly had lots to celebrate!

1999

In 1999, I felt that one of the main reasons for the Canadians not continuing was the lack of dissemination of information by Softball Canada and its provincial bodies, such as Softball Alberta and Softball British Columbia. In discussing the national tournament, for example, with players from Western Canada, I discovered that many were unaware that the Canadians even existed in '97 and '98. Thus, the Cats decided to enter both the Western Canadians and Eastern Canadians this year. Our team made history again by becoming the first OASA club to be allowed to compete in a Western Canadian Softball Championship, which was held in Calgary.

We got off to a slow start in the event as we lost our first two games: 8-2 to Victoria, B.C. and 9-7 to Manitoba #1. To have a chance at the playoffs the Cats had to win their next three games, which we did: 8-4 over Saskatchewan #2, 9-3 over Calgary Rockies, and 4-3 over Northwest Territories. That left us tied with the host Rockies and Manitoba #1 for the second playoff spot in our division. We defeated the Rockies again 7-4 but lost out to Manitoba 4-0. Hall of Famer Cliff Bishop was on the mound in the second tiebreaker, and he shut down the Cats. Bishop had previously beaten the club in 1980 in the Canadian Senior Championship in Saskatoon.

Victoria, B.C. eventually won the Western Canadian Masters title by defeating Saskatoon in the final. The B.C. team reached the Canadian finals in '97 but were beaten 2-1 by the host Cold Springs Cats.

In September of '99, because of a lack of interest and the cost of the trip to the Maritimes, we could muster only a skeleton crew in the Eastern Canadians. Four Mitchell players bolstered our ranks, which included the stalwart members of Roger Cole, Ray Bickle, Stephen Mitts, John Maughan, Jeff Timlin, Dave Ruthowsky, Mike Gibson, and myself (that was pretty scary!) As a result, we managed only two wins and lost two games. One of the wins was a default, by the way. Nevertheless, we enjoyed ourselves in the friendly city of Fredericton and renewed old friendships with players and coaches that we had met over the last three years.

Loyal Fans

Tom and Elsie Massey have been loyal Cats fans since the mid-seventies. You could always recognize Tom in his cowboy hat and high boots leaning over the fence beside the first or third base lines, taunting the opposing team's defense. In 1999, with their little red Honda, they roared into Calgary and then on to Fredericton to cheer on their team. They had little difficulty finding Calgary and the appropriate ball field because their son Tim lived nearby. However, traveling to Fredericton was another story. I drew a map for Tom to follow through Montreal. Unfortunately, he drove through the tunnel and returned via the bridge, returning to about the same spot where he had started. He finally found the #20 highway and proceeded towards New Brunswick. I reserved a room for Tom and Elsie in the Lord Beaverbrook in Fredericton, but when they hadn't arrived at 11:30pm I cancelled the room. At 11:45pm Tom came lumbering into the hotel and I hustled to the front desk and luckily obtained a room for the couple.

After the tournament, Tom and Elsie left the hotel at 1:00am to avoid traffic and routing problems, especially while traveling through Montreal. Fortunately, they arrived home safely.

2000

The Scarborough Blues won four straight games to capture the OASA Masters Elimination Tournament at Mitchell for the second consecutive year. The Blues and the runner-up Kitchener Waterloo Classics qualified to represent Ontario in the Eastern Canadian Masters competition in August of 2000.

The Cats won our opener 8-1 over Sudbury and then lost to Scarborough. We rebounded from the loss to win the next three straight: 8-0 over Cobourg, 9-5 over Sudbury again, and 4-1 over Mitchell. However, we were eliminated by K.W. Classics in the semi-final.

Roger Cole, who hurled in all or part of the club's six matches, was named the Most Valuable Player in the tournament.

2001

Toronto McMurphys won all four of their starts to take the OASA Masters Elimination tournament in Mitchell this year. Nine teams took part and it marked the first time a Toronto team had won the event. In 2000, the title was taken by the Scarborough Blues, and the Cold Springs Cats won the championship the first three years the category was offered by the OASA.

In 2001, we finished third in the nine-team event with a 3-2 record. The Cats nipped Scarborough Blues 2-1 in the opener but then lost to Toronto before coming back to blank Mitchell Masters 5-0 and squeeze past the Blues again 5-4. Then we were eliminated by Oshawa in the semi-final.

Although we finished out of the money in Mitchell, Chris Calbury, Roger Cole and I decided to host the Eastern Canadian Masters Championship in Baltimore in September. After several telephone calls and meetings, we managed to engage two teams from out-of-province, namely Fredericton, N.B. and Calgary, Alberta. They joined the Ontario teams of Cobourg, Oshawa, Scarborough, Fingal, Toronto, and of course the host Cats.

On a bright, warm weekend the Cold Springs team went undefeated in the competition as we won our three round robin matches 3-1 over Fredericton, 9-0 over Fingal, and 1-0 over Oshawa.

In the gold medal game against Oshawa in the seventh frame, Roger Cole fired a 1-2-3 punch to send the 1-1 tie into the eighth inning. In the bottom of the eighth, Bill Shannon laid down a perfect bunt single before advancing to second on a Stephen Mitts sacrifice bunt. Shannon then charged to third on a wild pitch. With only one out, Oshawa decided to walk the next two Cold Springs batters, loading the bases and hoping to force the Cats into a double play. However, things didn't work out as planned. With two strikes against Ray Bickle and the bases loaded, another errant Oshawa pitch sent

Shannon racing for home, but he never made it there. He was tripped and tagged out but the umpire called interference and the run counted, giving the Cats a 2-1 championship victory. Another dramatic finish!

Besides winning the title on the field, the Cats helped to provide a good sum of money for the new Baltimore Arena as well.

2002

In 2002, the Stoney Creek Gators won six straight games to win their first OASA Masters Championship in a ten-team tournament at Ingersoll. Later in the summer, the Gators won the Eastern Canadian Masters Championship at Fredericton, N.B.! According to the tournament director Bruce Wills, the total number of teams dropped to four because the Ontario club was allowed 35-40 year olds and the Maritime teams had older players. Thus, two teams decided not to participate.

In the Ontario Championship this year, the Cats defeated Ingersoll and Mount Elgin. However, we were eliminated with two losses to Mitchell 6-2 and Stoney Creek 9-4.

2003

In the winter of 2002-2003, Roger Cole and I decided that the Cats would probably fold because of the diminishing supply of appropriately-aged players in the area. Consequently, I helped Alec Rutherford with another Masters team, namely the Colborne Merchants. We worked along with Harry Jeschke, Legion Fields manager, to bring the OASA Masters Championship to Cobourg, where the Cold Springs club had hosted it in 1997.

Later in the spring, Roger made last minute phone calls to Gary Latchford and Mike O'Hearn to try to muster up players from the defunct Scarborough Blues team. Gary and Michael were successful in recruiting two valuable players - namely Mike Raccioppio and Mark Thompson - from the former Scarborough team. Also, another significant addition was Mike McCaw, whom Don Goodfellow recruited out of Belleville. Thus, along with the old stalwarts and new bodies, the Cats were rebuilt in 2003, and I was wearing two hats.

The Masters Championship schedule that materialized was composed of teams in three distinct divisions. In Division B, the Cats dominated by winning all three of their starts: 4-3 over Waterloo on a sixth inning home run by Mike McCaw and a four-hitter by Gary Vowles, 11-9 over Stoney Creek, and 15-0 over Fingal.

In quarter-final play, Cold Springs advanced with a 6-0 victory over Cobourg, behind Gary Vowles who gave up just four hits in recording the shutout. The Cats reached the final with a 5-2 decision over Stoney Creek, thanks to a grand slam in the fifth by Mike McCaw. Gary Vowles threw five innings for the win and held Stoney Creek runless.

The Cats seemed to "run out of gas" in the gold medal final against Oshawa. As I recalled in the 2001 Eastern Canadian Masters Championship game against the same team, we were victorious. This, perhaps, gave the Oshawa team the incentive to win the rematch in front of 350 fans at Legion Fields. The final outcome was a resounding win by Oshawa: 8-1.

Nevertheless, the Cold Springs club qualified, along with Oshawa, to play in the Eastern Canadian Championship at Truro, N.S in September. In the Ontario tournament the Top Pitcher award was presented to Gary Vowles, who threw 21 innings with a 1.0209 ERA. Mike Raccioppio was the top hitter batting 9 for 18 at the plate.

Four Cats players from the silver medal winning squad - Mike McIvor, Ray Bickle, Mark Thompson, and Gary Latchford - did not travel east to the Maritimes that year. In their place we chose Ron Rosengren of Mississauga and Tim Chant of Cobourg, both members of the Colborne Merchants, as well as Cobourg Masters player Robbie Ellis, of Campbellford. I felt that these players would add the extra hitting depth to the club. We already had solid pitching with Roger Cole, Gary Vowles and Jim Oakman making the road trip east.

The Cold Springs Cats captured the bronze medal at the 2003 Eastern Canadian Masters Championship, held in Truro. We opened the tournament on Friday with a 1-0 setback against Durham, N.S.. However, Roger Cole pitched a gem and was named the Cats Most Valuable Player with a two-hitter.

On Saturday, the Cats rebounded with a 7-0 mercy victory over Glasgow, N.S.. Gary Vowles, with some fine hitting and pitching, was named the game's MVP. In game three, Cold Springs defeated Fredericton, N.B. 7-6. In the bottom of the seventh inning with two out and the game deadlocked at 6-6, Tim Chant cracked a homerun to give the Cats the win. Tim was named the game MVP while Jim Oakman and Gary Vowles combined for the win on the mound.

Cold Springs posted their third straight victory of the day, another 7-6 decision, over Calgary, Alberta in game four. With his fine fielding play and strong hitting, Chant earned the second MVP nod of the tournament. Vowles and Cole combined for the victory.

Cold Springs' 3-1 record tied us for first in our pool with Minesing, Ontario and Calgary, Alberta. In the Cats first playoff game on Sunday, our bats were silenced when Calgary mercied us 7-0. Calgary went on to win the Eastern Canadian Championship, defeating Minesing 2-0 in the gold medal final.

Thus the Cats gained a third place finish. Another highlight of the tournament was the hitting of a true Cats stalwart - Stephen Mitts. He finished the round robin play with an amazing .769 batting average.

On the East Coast we had an excellent time in rekindling old acquaintances. However, on the field our power hitters didn't come through in key situations, which accounted for our flat finish in the tournament.

2004

In 2004, after staging two fund-raising events with the great help of Bill Elliott, Barry Dawe, and Roger Cole the Cats planned to compete in at least 2 fastball tournaments. One was basically an intermediate tournament (The Jim Bradford Classic) held in Baltimore during June. The other was the Masters Eliminations (The Jack Cook Classic) held in Port Perry in July.

The OASA elimination tournament in Port Perry is staged in honour of the late Jack Cook, who was an ardent worker in the OASA as a president, secretary and convenor. I remember Jack distinctly one September of in the mid 1990's after the Eastern Canadian Championship in his hometown, when he greeted me with the usual "old farmer" salutation. Then we discussed the current status of the softball world, after which Jack walked to Diamond One, where he succumbed to a major heart attack. What a tragic ending for such a fine person.

At the Masters level, especially, a manager requires a great deal of help in enlisting players from year to year. In this regard, I discovered that Mike McCaw and Mike O'Hearn fit the bill to a "T". The former was responsible for recruiting a fine fielding catcher – Darren Crouter, and the latter a fleet footed outfielder, Steve Mo.

We entered the Jim Bradford Classic with two basic goals in mid-June. One was to practice together as a team and the second was to have fun while participating. Consequently, we achieved both goals in Baltimore. On Friday, we started the tournament slowly as Cobourg Stingers humbled us 11-3. But then we roared back on Saturday with wins over Peterborough Juniors 8-1 and Stittsville 7-3. This placed us in the playoffs against Belleville on Sunday, when unfortunately, because of base running miscues in the early frames, we didn't score a run and were defeated 3-0.

Our second tournament occurred in Port Perry where we began the Masters Eliminations on Friday with a convincing victory 9-2 over Cloyne (comprised mainly of former fastball superstars). On Saturday we suffered our first loss at the hands of Kitchener-Waterloo (4-3) and a major setback to our long-time pitching ace Roger Cole when he severely injured his arm. Later that same day, the Cats clobbered Chepstow (8-2). In the preliminary round, because of our wins and our hefty plus, minus aggregate we gained a first-place finish in our division. This standing meant we crossed over Sunday to meet our long standing rivals, Oshawa in our first playoff game. We gained some revenge for the 2003 loss to Winchester-Arms in the final by defeating Oshawa 5-1. Later that morning we were defeated by Colborne 3-1 which placed us in the bronze medal game with Stoney Creek. Luckily, in the 7th inning we scrambled back to beat the Gators 3-1 and gain a 3rd place finish in the 15 team elimination tournament. In the tournament Gary Vowles came to the forefront and pitched stupendously during 5 and ½ games.

At the time of this writing, the Cats are preparing to attend the World Senior Fastball Tournament in North Bay on Labour Day Weekend.

In one regard, it has been a disastrous summer of '04 in the fact that because of a serious arm injury, Roger Cole has been forced to hang up his pitching shoes after a long and illustrious career. I've told Roger, on a few occasions that when he retires from pitching, I'll retire from managing. This is perhaps, the cue to disappear from the fastball scene.

However, that World's Masters Tournament in Edmonton in 2005 sounds very appealing. Well! That belongs to another chapter in a future book. Perhaps....maybe....I'll think about it.

During the last 30 years, I was fortunate enough to have been surrounded by several great ball players. This has resulted in winning 7 Ontarios, 2 Canadians, 1 Eastern Canadian, 1 Finalist, and at least 2 third place finishes. However, as I have stated before winning laurels is only one aspect of participating in this great game of fastball. Another very important aspect is making and rebuilding friendships. In competing against eight provinces and territories, and US teams from states such as Ohio and New York, I have acquired relationships that will certainly last a lifetime.

My sincere appreciation is extended to Shannon Cole and Donna Cole for proof reading and transcribing my ramblings. Also, a great deal of thanks goes to the following people, publications, and facilities for providing reference material: Layton Dodge, Peter Handley, Darryl Thompson, Bonnie Timlin, Ray Bickle, Cobourg Star, "High and Inside", New Brunswick Telegraph and Journal, Softball Ontario News, and the Gordon King Centre.



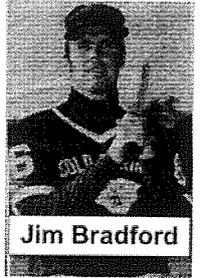
1975 - 1st O.A.S.A. Championship - Intermediate C
 Back Row (L to R); Harold Lang, Al Burnham, Ray Bickle, Lorne Jamieson, Craig Gray. Middle Row; John Maughan, Ivan Ferguson, Ewart Timlin, John Cane, Jeff Timlin, Bill Cane, Lynn Thackeray. Front Row; Don McDonald, Paul Hasson, Wayne Ferguson, Jim Bradford - Absent from picture Roger Cole



1973 Champions of Hamilton Township League



Harold Lang



Jim Bradford



Paul Hasson



Ivan Ferguson



John Cane

ColdSprings All-Ontario intermediate 'C' champions



COLDSPRINGS CATS All-Ontario Intermediate 'C' softball champions. Front Row, front left - coach Ed Rollins, catcher Wayne Ferguson, Ivan Ferguson, John Cane, Roger Wakeman, Roger Cole.

Eric Buttar, Jim Bradford, Back Row - Lorne Jamieson, S. McKnight, Joe Walters, Don McDonald, Ray Bickle, Paul Hasson, Harold Lang, John Maughan, manager Ewart Timlin, Allan Burnham

Cats hold their own with OFL Oshawa MCL club

Landers Authors Perfect Game, Cole Spins No-Hitter

Cats Earn Tie, Win, Credibility

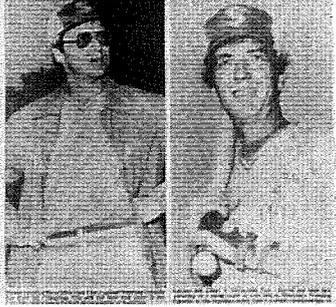
1979



1978 Front row l to r - Lorne Jamieson, Roger Cole, Ed Rollins, John Cane, bat boy Kent Harper, Jeff Timlin, Harold Lang, Mike McIvor, coach Jim Chase, back row Murray Ganick, Al Burnham, Ray Bickle, Don McDonald, manager Ewart Timlin, Graydon McIntosh, Phil Krauter, John Maughan, Ross Timlin, absentees Neil Francis, Bill Ryan, Roger McIntosh, and Terry Irwin.



Mike McIvor won the MVP Award at the Sr. A's in London. He hit three home runs during the tournament.



Steve Mitts and Bill Elliott



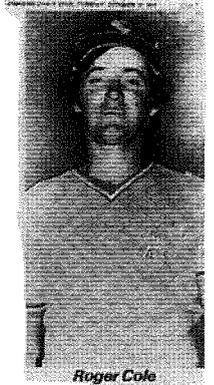
Ray Bickle



Allan Burnham



Jim Burkitt



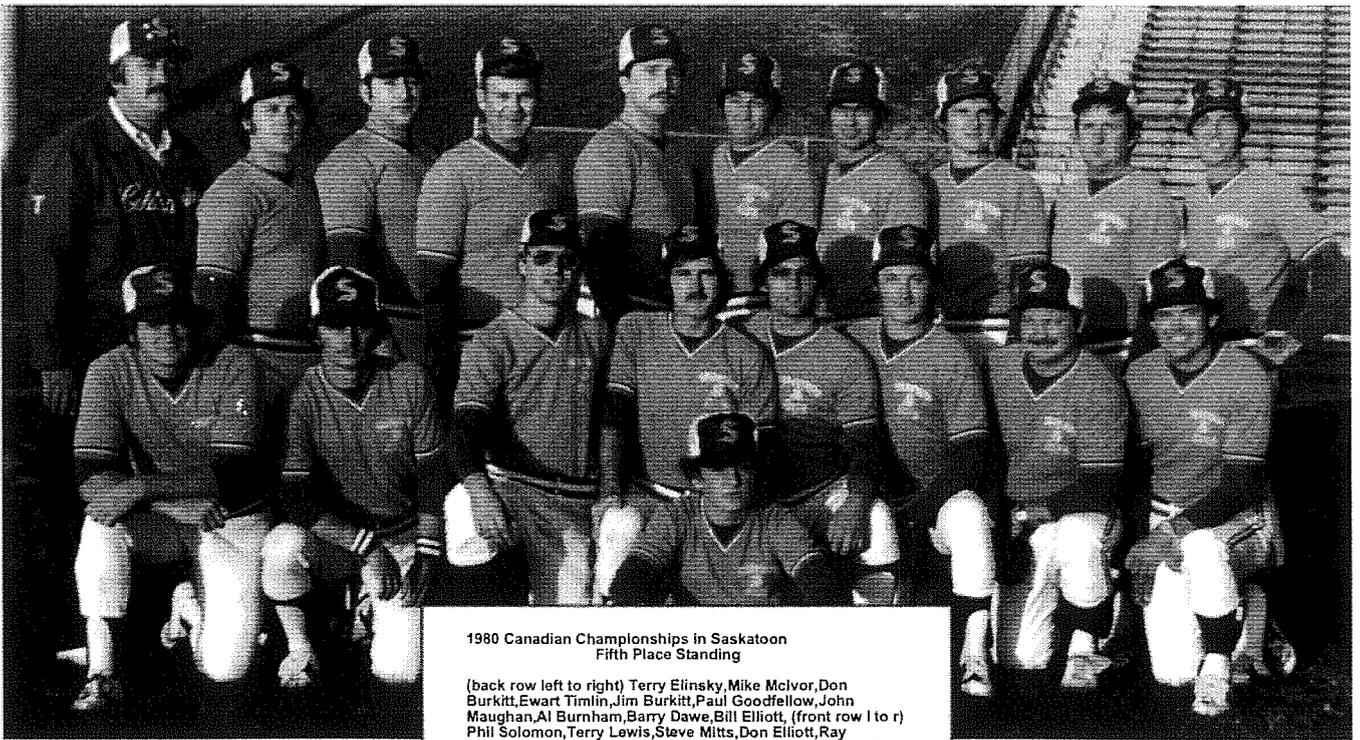
Roger Cole



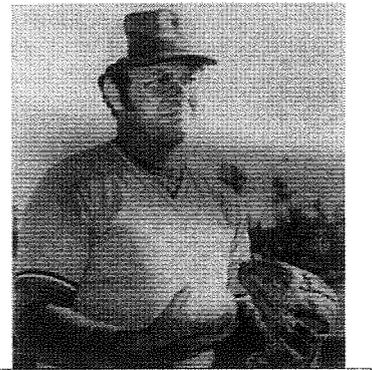
Don Elliott



Paul Goodfellow



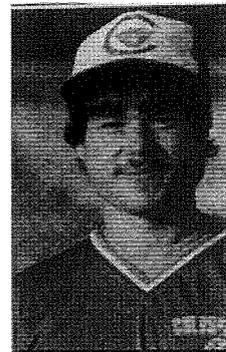
1980 Canadian Championships in Saskatoon
Fifth Place Standing
(back row left to right) Terry Elinsky, Mike McIvor, Don Burkitt, Ewart Timlin, Jim Burkitt, Paul Goodfellow, John Maughan, Al Burnham, Barry Dawe, Bill Elliott, (front row l to r) Phil Solomon, Terry Lewis, Steve Mitts, Don Elliott, Ray Bickle, Roger Cole, Steve Virag, Lorne Jamieson, bat boy Greg Timlin



Dave Ruthowsky, who played for Victoria BC and helped win Canadian Sr. Championships, joined the Cats in 1981.



1982
 back row l to r - Brian Madge, Dave Ruthowsky, Mike McIvor, Paul Goodfellow, Al Burnham, Ray Bickle, Roger Cole, Doc Clarey, Doug Campbell, Ewart Timlin, Barry Dawe; front row - Paul Marneau, Bill Elliott, Bobby Smith, Larry Landry, Stephen Mitts; absentees Brian Condon, Jim Burkitt, Terry Elinsky, bat boy Rick Ainsworth.



Cats Centre for
Paul Marneau
 top OFL rookie
1982



Rick Ainsworth, Bat Boy

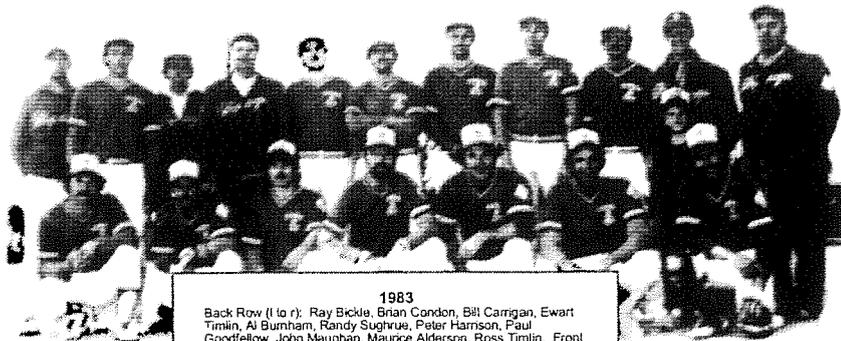


Cold Springs Cats 1983 Fastball Club

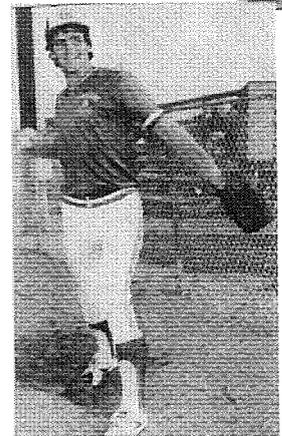
Roger Cole



Dave Ruthowsky



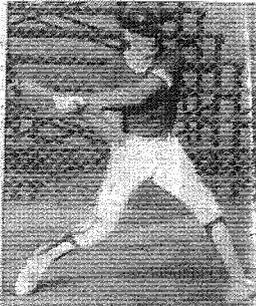
1983
 Back Row (l to r): Ray Bickle, Brian Condon, Bill Carrigan, Ewart Timlin, Al Burnham, Randy Sughrue, Peter Harrison, Paul Goodfellow, John Maughan, Maurice Alderson, Ross Timlin. Front Row: Gary Hoppa, Frank Schram, Paul Marneau, Stephen Mitts, Mike McIvor, Bill Elliott, bat boy Shaun Bickle, John Cane



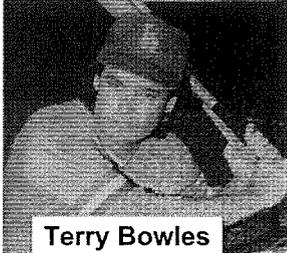
Brian Condon, OFL Rookie of the Year 1983



1985
 Front row (l to r): Jeff Timlin, Stephen Mitts, Mike McIvor, Ray Bickle. Back row: Ross Timlin, Ewart Timlin, Wayne Wells, Bill Elliott, Peter Harrison, Roger Cole, Bill Buys, Maurice Alderson, and Bill Carrigan. Absentees: Gary Hope, Terry Bowles, Perry Bowles, Bernie Nicholls, Brian Condon, and John McDonald.



Bernie Nicholls
Second King of Cats
 NHL star for L.A.



Terry Bowles



1986 Cats — Cold Springs Cats' efforts to bring this area its first provincial OASA title since 1980 did not bear fruit this past weekend as they fell in the semi-finals of the Ontario Intermediate 'B' championship tournament in Mitchell. Front row, from the left — equipment manager Ross Timlin, John Cane, Rick Clark, Jeff Timlin, Mike McIvor, Roger Cole, playing coach Ray Bickle, Dave Tinney. Back row — assistant coach Howie Mouncey, manager Ewart Timlin, Harold Lang, Gary Vowles, Brian Beatty, Roger Alexander, Stu Little, John Maughan, Greg Timlin, Gary Hope, Maurice (The Cat) Alderson.



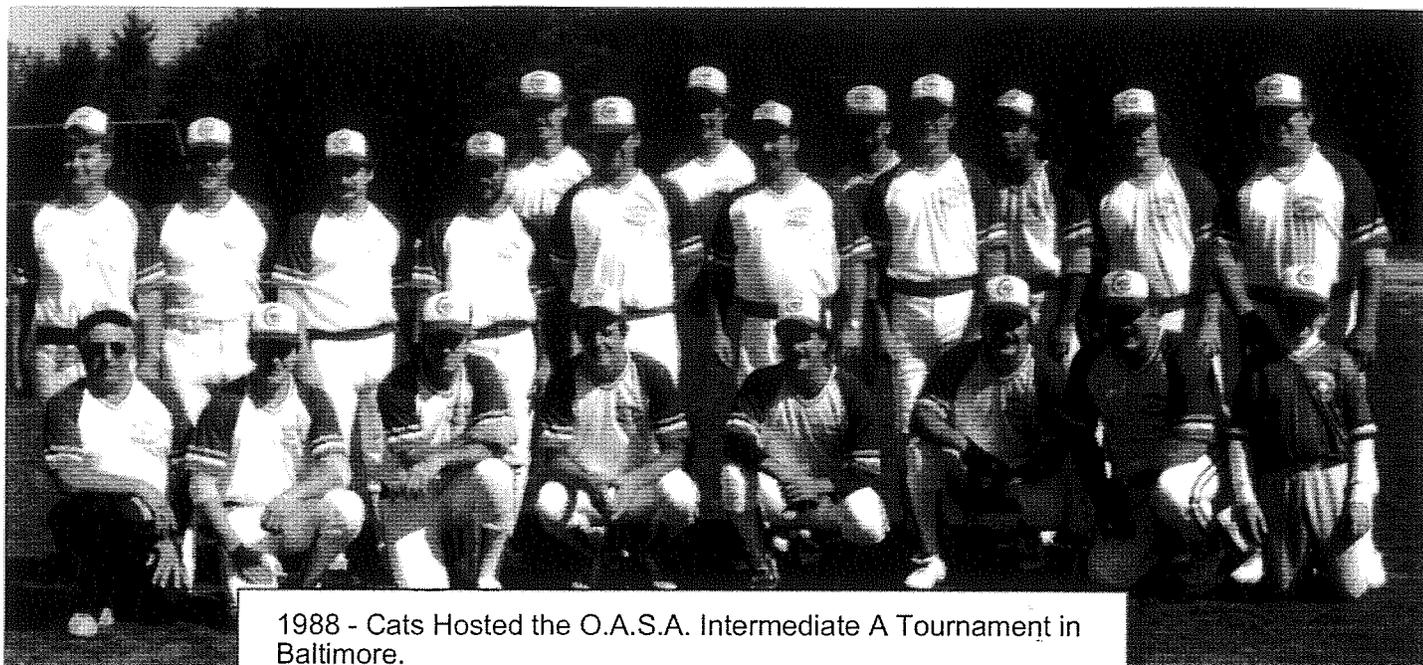
Gary Hope - OASA Top Batter Award



Cats sidetracked — Cold Springs Cats, 1987 version, didn't accomplish what they set out to do in the OASA Intermediate A championship tournament this past weekend at Norwich. Front row, left to right — John Maughan, Roger Alexander, Jeff Timlin with son

Rocky, Rick Clark, Mike Irwin; Back row — equipment manager Ross Timlin, Roger Cole, Rob Hook, Craig Minifie, GM Ewart Timlin, Stu Little, Howie Mouncey, Gary Vowles, Gary Hope, Harold Lang.

Photo by Greg Timlin



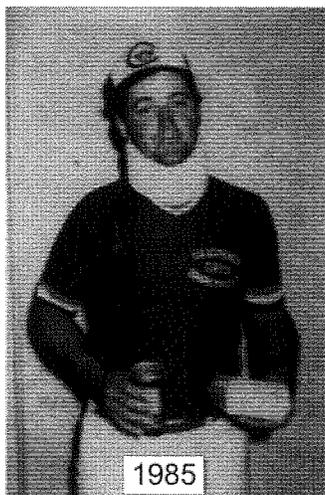
1988 - Cats Hosted the O.A.S.A. Intermediate A Tournament in Baltimore.



1989 O.A.S.A. Intermediate B Champions



In 1989 Roger receives one of his many VIP awards from over the last 30 years. This one was presented in North Fredericksburgh by OASA Convenor Bill Danford. Roger is the only member of our club to participated in all of our teams since 1975. Without his capable and likeable qualities the Cats would not exist.



1985



John Maughan

John Maughan, a dangerous power hitter and original Cat, played for the Club from 1975 through 2001.



1996 - O.A.S.A. Master's Champions

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Sports

Cold Springs Cats master Ontario's best once again



1997- Ontario and Canadian Masters Fastball Champions

This was the first ever Canadian Masters Fastball Championship!
(front row from left) bat boy Rob Hardy, Tim Neron, Harold Lang, John Cane, Ray Bickle, Gary Hope, Mike McIvor, Ross Timlin; (back left) Jeff Timlin, John Maughan, Steve Nealy, Dave Ruthowsky, Roger Cole, Larry Landry, Barry Dawe, Bill Elliott, Paul Goodfellow, Terry Lewis, Don Elliott and Ewart Timlin.



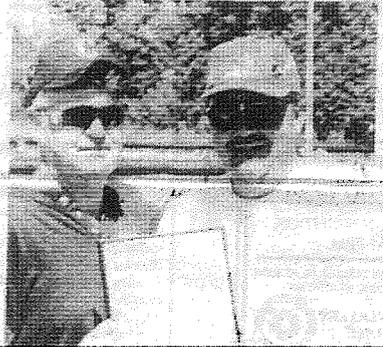
Hardware haul — The Cold Springs made it a sweep of the individual awards at the Canadian National Masters Fastpitch Championships.

Photos by Dave Milne and Jim den Hollander

As a team, Cats batted a combined .333 (63-for-189). MVP for the championship game went to second baseman

Steve Miks who not only shone at the plate, but also picked up five assists and three put outs on the defensive side.

Cobourg Wins More Than Games



Harry Jeschke presents E.T. with an "Appreciation Award" in 1997.

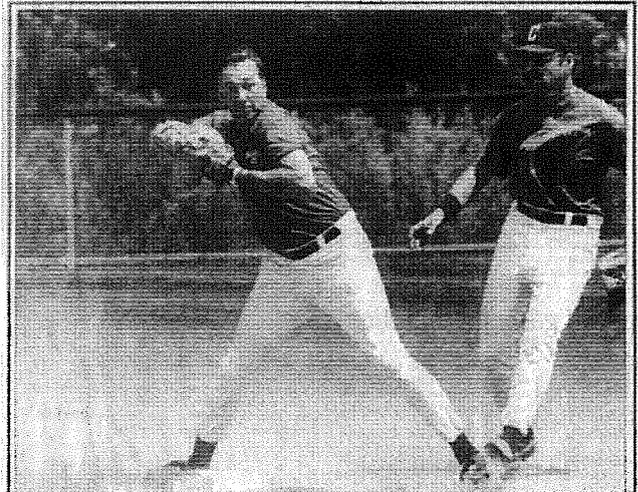


Hero hurler — Roger Cole of the Cold Springs Cats (left) was the obvious choice for the Top Pitcher award at the 1997 Ontario Amateur Softball Association Masters tournament held at Legion Fields on the weekend. Presenting the award to Cole is Legion Fields manager and tournament organizer Harry Jeschke. Cole stopped the bleeding for the Cats in the championship game, coming in with his team down in the second inning and helping them to an 11-5 win over Wellesley/Wilmet.

Photos by Jim den Hollander



Bill Elliott and Terry Lewis and the dramatic Gold Medal win against Victoria B.C. in 1997. Terry won the Most Valuable Pitcher Award at the National Event.



They're all in the Cats — Shortstop Paul (left) of the Cold Springs Cats (left) turns a double play during the championship game of

Mittie and Goody were always a dynamic duo on the Cats infield.

Sports

Cold Springs claims national title in thriller final





1998 Canadian Master's Champions at Saint John, N.B.



Pete Landers



Bob Van Impe, Curator of Canada's Hall of Fame Committee, presents Pete Landers with his "Hall of Fame Award" at Calgary in 1992. Pete played with the Cats from 1998 through to 2001.



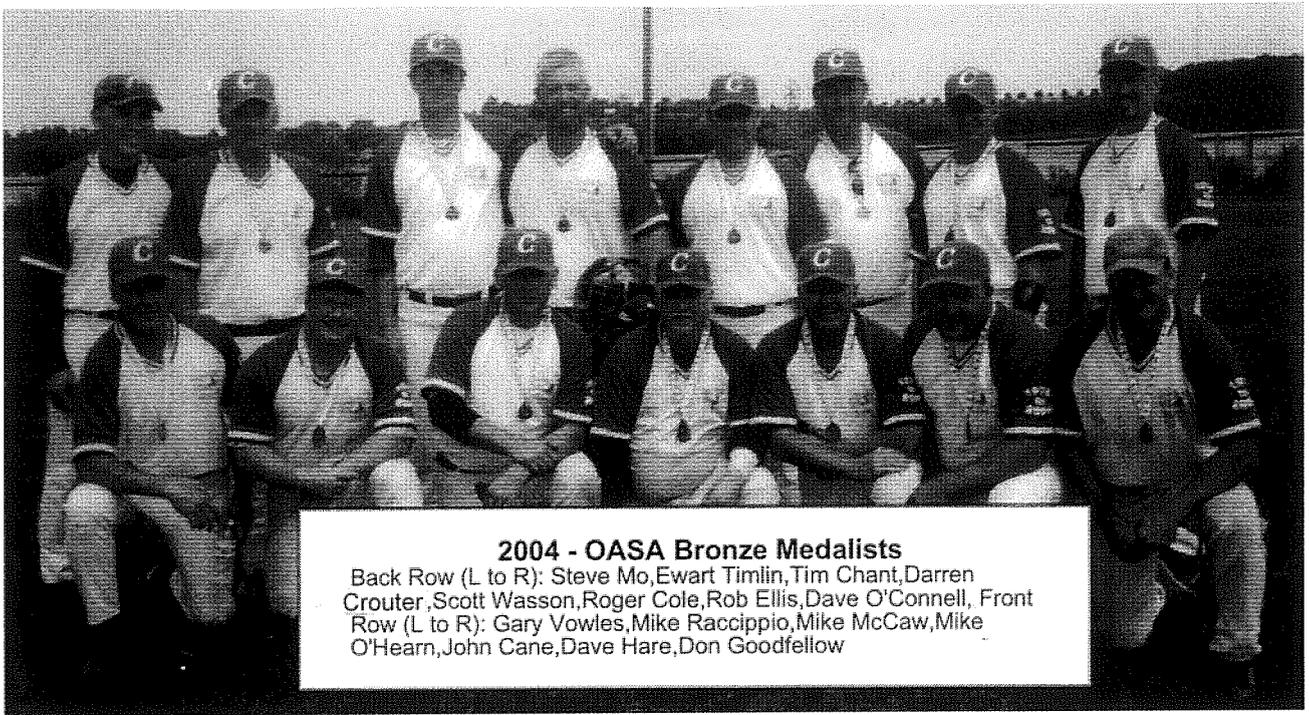
1999 Western Canadians at Calgary

WESTERN EXPERIENCE: The Cold Springs Cats returned home from the Western Canadian masters fastball championship after finishing tied for second in round robin play. Front row (from left): Peter Landers, Bill Shannon, Stephen Mitts, Don Elloff, Ross Timlin and John Cane. Middle row: Gary Hope, Jeff Timlin, Tim Noron, Mike McIvor and Paul Godfellow. Back row: Dave Ruthowsky, Harold Lano, Roger Cplia, Mike Gibson, Ewart Timlin and Ray Bickle.

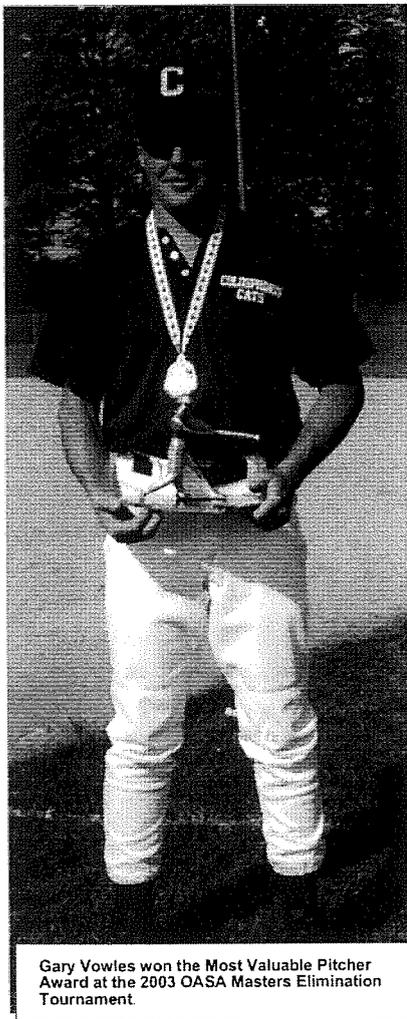
Photo courtesy of BONNIE TIMLIN



SILVER MEDALLISTS: The Cold Springs Cats captured a silver medal at the 2003 Ontario Amateur Softball Association Masters Championships on the weekend. Shown front, from left are Mike Racioppo, Don Goodfellow, Mike O'Hearn, Gary Vowles, John Gene (lying down), Ray Baska, Stephen Mitts, Roger Cole and Brian Beatty. Back: Ross Timlin, Dave O'Connell, Mark Thompson, Jim Oakman, Mike McCaw, Ewart Timlin, Jeff Timlin, Mike McIvor and Gary Latchford.



2004 - OASA Bronze Medalists
 Back Row (L to R): Steve Mo, Ewart Timlin, Tim Chant, Darren Crouter, Scott Wasson, Roger Cole, Rob Ellis, Dave O'Connell, Front Row (L to R): Gary Vowles, Mike Raccippio, Mike McCaw, Mike O'Hearn, John Cane, Dave Hare, Don Goodfellow



Gary Vowles won the Most Valuable Pitcher Award at the 2003 OASA Masters Elimination Tournament.



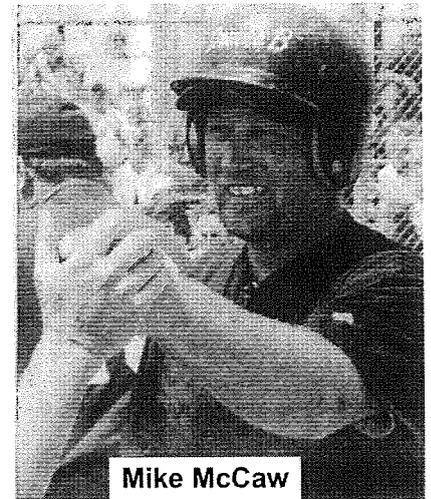
Mike Raccippio was the Top Batter in the 2003 OASA Masters Eliminations Tournament.



HOME RUN KING! Local baseball star Craig Minifie (left) captured the home run crown at the Masters Championships 2001.



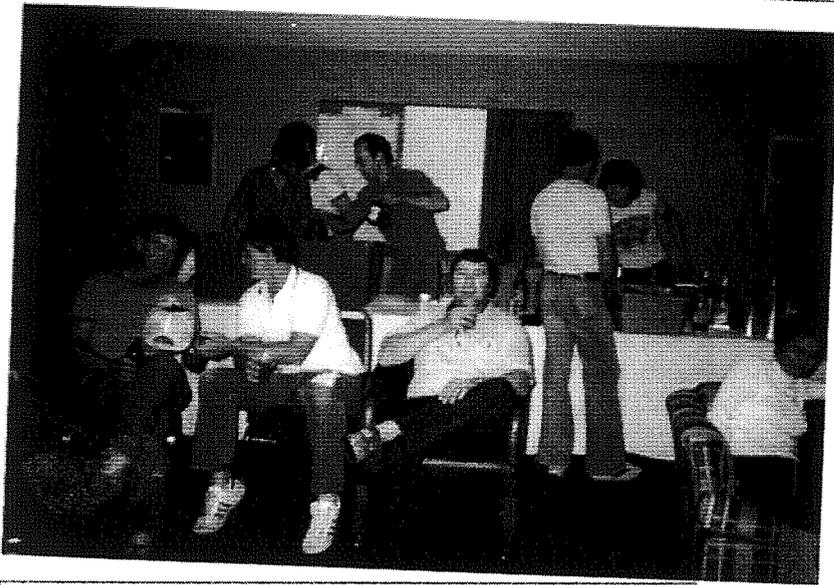
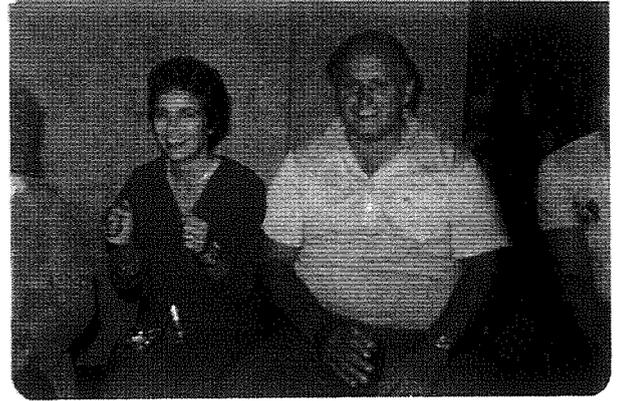
Don Goodfellow



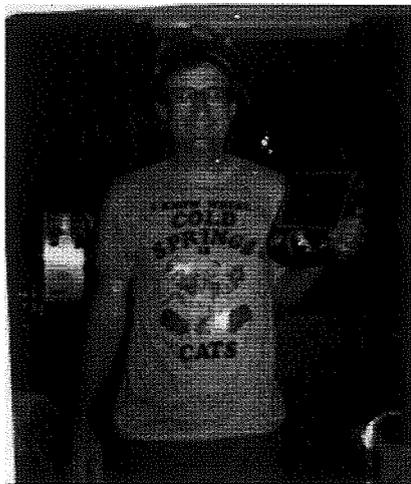
Mike McCaw



Dorothy and Clarke Sommerville enjoying post game celebrations at the Nationals in Saskatoon - 1980. Sommervilles have been a major sponsor throughout the years.

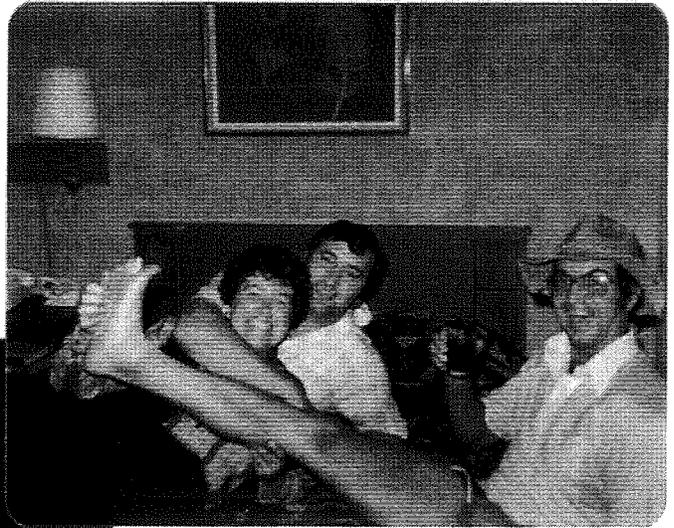
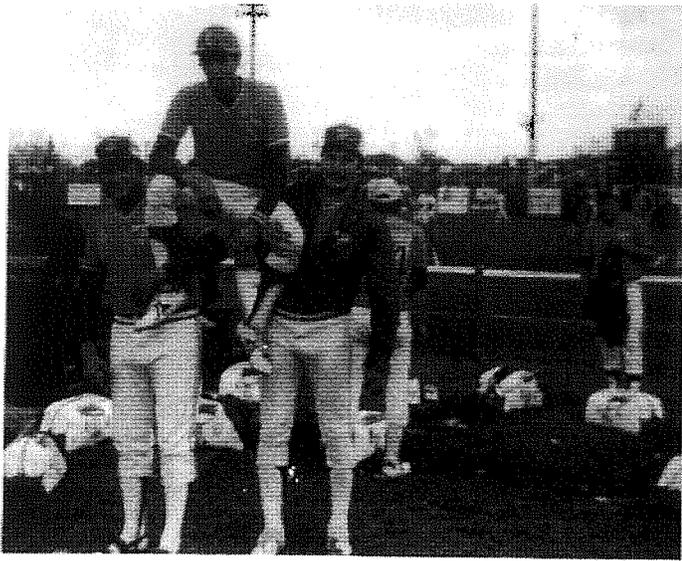


Blasts from the Past



Mike from Canmore, found out where Cold Springs was when he hosted our team at the Nationals in Saskatoon.







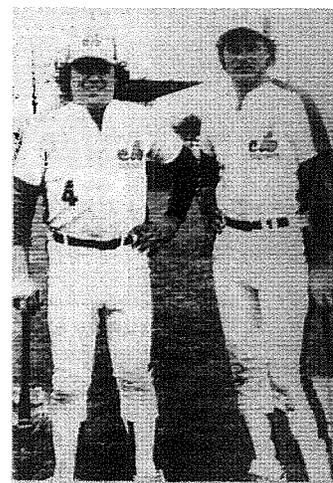
J. R. COOK



Maurice "The Cat"



1980 Oshawa City League Awards
Al Burnham - Top Batter and Most Valuable Player
Roger Cole - Most Valuable Pitcher
Ewart Timlin with League and Playoff Trophies



Jeff Timlin and Marty Kernaghan
Photo provided by the author. Jeff Timlin played for the Oshawa team in the Oshawa City League.

Marty Kernaghan (top right) was inducted into the ISC Hall of Fame in 2002. Marty played for the Cats in 1978.

Cold Springs Cats "Through The Years"

Players and Management

Rick Ainsworth
Maurice Alderson
Roger Alexander
Brian Beatty
Phil Beatty
Dave Bemma
Ray Bickie
Perry Bowles
Terry Bowles
Jim Bradford
Les Brill
Don Burkitt
Jim Burkitt
Allan Burnham
Eric Buttars
Bill Buys
Chris Calbury
Bill Campbell
Doug Campbell
Bill Cane
John Cane
Peter Cane
Bill Carrigan
Tim Chant
Jim Chase
Rick Clark
Roger Cole
Brian Condon
Mike Connelly
Chris Cook
Darren Crouter
Phil Crouter
Andy Dalgarno
Barry Dawe
Brain Dolley
Dan Donahue
Rob Doncaster
Terry Elinsky
Bill Elliott
Don Elliott

Stan McKnight
Craig Minifie
Steve Mitts
Steve Mo
Howie Mouncey
Steve Neeley
Tim Neron
Bernie Nicholls
Jim Oakman
Dave O'Connell
Mike O'Hearn
Gord Oosterhoff
Rick Palmateer
Mike Raccippio
Ed Ristan
Bill Rollings
Pat Rutherford
Dave Ruthowsky
Bill Ryan
Frank Schram
Bill Shannon
Phil Solomon
Randy Sughrue
Lynn Thackeray
Mark Thompson
Ewart Timlin
Greg Timlin
Jeff Timlin
Ross Timlin
Dave Tinney
Steve Virag
Gary Vowles
Roger Wakeman
Dave Waidie
Scott Wasson
Joe Watters
Wayne Wells
Kevin Woodward

Rob Ellis
Gary Ferguson
Ivan Ferguson
Wayne Ferguson
Neil Francis
Murray Garrick
Mike Gibson
Don Goodfellow
Paul Goodfellow
Craig Gray
Rob Hardy
Dave Hare
Kent Harper
Paul Hasson
Dave Hedger
Ron Herriot
Rob Hook
Gary Hope
Mike Irwin
Terry Irwin
Lorne Jamieson
Rick Jaynes
Marty Kernaghan
Pete Landers
Larry Landry
Harold Lang
Scott Lang
Gary Latchford
Terry Lewis
Stu Little
Don MacDonald
Bryan Madge
Todd March
Paul Marineau
John Maughan
Mike May
Mike McCaw
Roger McIntosh
Mike McIvor