

Long Island's Sue Taylor

By BILL MULLON
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Mick Norton is the nicest guy you'll ever want to meet and when he brought his Huntington, Long Island team down from New York, an unseen treat came with the trip.

Sue Taylor, only 16 years old, was something special to watch in the National

Women's Slow-Pitch Tournament held this year in Satellite Beach.

Norton, director of the Huntington Y.M.C.A., guided his team to a 43-5 regular season record and won the 10-team Long Island metro championship. The Huntington ladies coasted through five games and won the title, unbeaten.

Miss Taylor and Judy

Spina were co-Most Valuable Player award winners in the metro championship. Miss Spina banged a phenomenal nineteen hits in the five games and Miss Taylor cracked thirteen hits, seven of them home runs, and knocked home sixteen additional scores.

Norton and his MICE, as he appropriately calls them, have been playing slow-pitch softball for only three years.

In 1965, at the Huntington Fast-Pitch Invitational, Coach Norton defeated the national champions, Rabastos Brickettes. The national champions lost only four games that entire year. Norton noticed the Brickettes' tremendous pitching and said, "after we won we realized that the team wasn't going anywhere with our pitching. That's when we started thinking about slow-pitch and three years later we started."

The MICE won a slow-pitch tournament over Memorial Day weekend in Rhode Island this year before they left for the nationals.

The Long Island bunch had no easy trip to Satellite Beach. Since last December the girls have been selling Christmas trees, manning food stands for all county sports, and preparing buffet dinners after all the basketball games. They earned the money and consequently made it to the nationals.

Coach Norton and his team arrived in Satellite Beach Tuesday afternoon

around twelve. They were early, so the squad played a practice doubleheader against the Oklahoma City metro champions, who were staying in the same motel as Norton and his crew.

The MICE posted a 3-2 record and the two losses came by a total of two runs. West Virginia, the No. 4 team in this year's national tournament, knocked-off Long Island Saturday night, 5-4, on a two-run homer in the last inning. Wisconsin, No. 10 in this year's tournament, scored seven runs in the first two innings and held on to hand the MICE their second tourney defeat in the double-elimination affair. The Long Island metro girls fought back 7-6 going into the fifth and had the tying and winning runs on in the last two innings but could not produce the clutch hit to get them home.

For the next few years, at least, teams in the coming national tournaments will hear of and be reckoned with the Long Island metro champion MICE.

The only quality the MICE lack is experience but they received plenty of that in the national tournament this year.

There are only two players on the team over 24 years of age. One, Arline Norton, is the coach's wife. But, some will tell you, even Norton himself that she was by far the best-fielding first baseman in the tournament; not to



SHORTFIELDER JO WINFREE
... Led Comets in hitting in nationals

it has an alarm system with

or Star Of Tournament

mention that she hit .533 in the tourney which was ninth best among the twelve-hundred girls that participated. Miss Norton is 30 and the other one over 24 is 35-year-old Evelyn Bozeman. Miss Bozeman was the team's second leading slugger behind sixteen year old sensation Sue Taylor.

Three MICE were in the top twelve hitters in the tournament, Miss Norton was ninth with her .533 average, Miss Spina placed 12th by hitting .500 and, of course, there is Sue Taylor who led the tournament in hitting at a .722 clip.

This year's national was only their second and they finished in 12th place. Chattanooga, Tennessee was the site of their first national tourney two years ago where again their two losses were by a total of two runs. In fact both games in Norton's first national went extra innings. The first loss went twelve innings and his second defeat took nine innings before he bowed out in 1969. Coach Norton has been through some hard-luck in the last couple of years and next year maybe the law-of-averages will swing his way.

Nearly all of Norton's girls came up through his farm league which is called the "batting babes league."

In fact one of Norton's MICE, Bonnie Robertson, has been with him since she was six years old when she

started in the "batting babes league."

It might be true that the Huntington horde lacked experience but they certainly did not lack maturity.

Norton said, "everyone was nervous because of their age but they were mature because each one of

them knew what to do in any situation."

The MICE of Huntington Y.M.C.A. on Long Island are a very young pack and their youngest is the next super-star of women's slow-pitch softball, that being the above mentioned Sue Taylor.

Miss Taylor is the daughter

of Irene and George Taylor, who works for Newsday, a long Island daily, in the financial department.

Norton added "everyone knows Sue is a great hitter, but what they don't realize is that she is a tremendous fielder, also."

"She has great range and is unbelievable in the field," the coach replied.

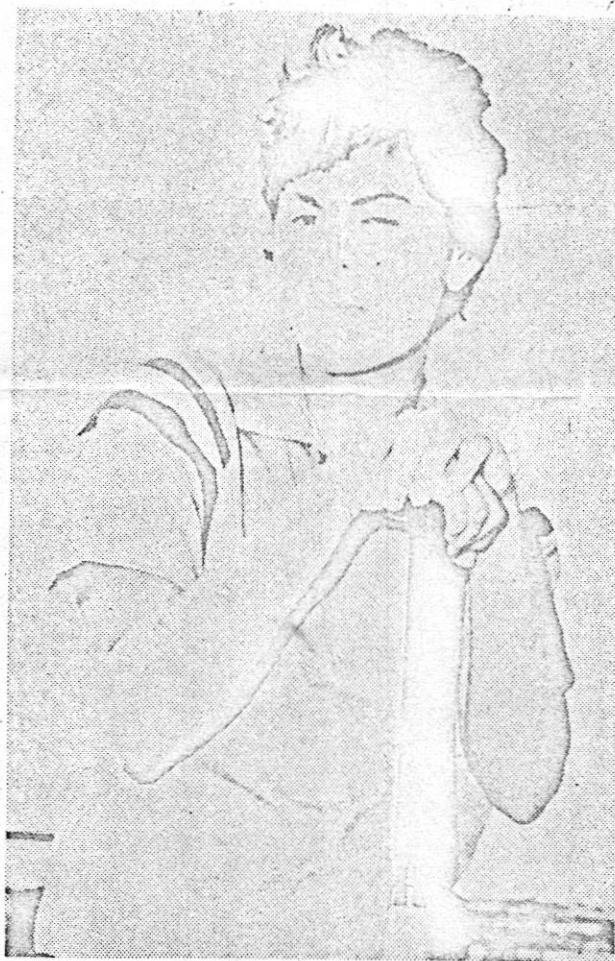
"At times she runs outfielders out of the way. She is an unbelievable player," Norton said.

Miss Taylor stroked at least two hits in every Long Island game. She not only led the tournament in hitting (batting average) but the young one was first in home runs with five, second in runs-batted-in with nine, and was third — along with Miss Spina — in runs scored with eleven.

"If you were to put Nancy Oldham (five time All-American) and Hoppy Hopkins (five time MVP in the national tournament) together Sue is a better fielder and she's twice as young as either one of them," the Y.M.C.A. director remarked.

"When she's at bat," Norton says, "the outfielders don't know where to play. Because if the fielders move in Sue will hit it over their heads. And if the outfielders play deep she'll hit in front of them. You know she's effective, look at her batting average."

"If we could have gone further in the tournament, she would have definitely



COMET SHARON HARRIS
... Slowed down by injury