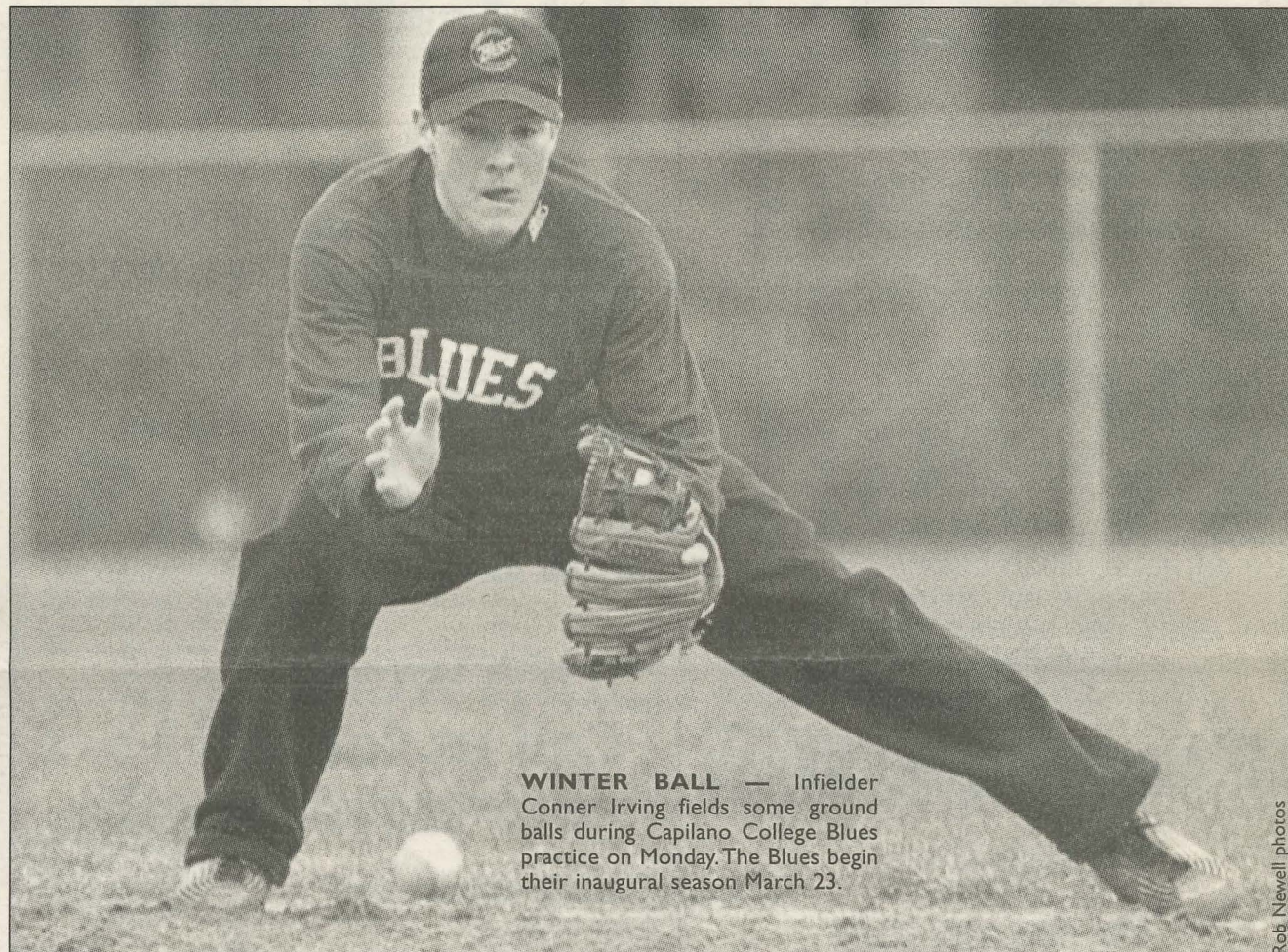


# The Boys of Winter



**HEATER** — Catcher Jeff St. Pierre readies for some high heat.



**WINTER BALL** — Infielder Conner Irving fields some ground balls during Capilano College Blues practice on Monday. The Blues begin their inaugural season March 23.

Rob Newell photos

## Capilano College Blues prepare for inaugural baseball season with spring training — in mid-February.

By Justin Beddall

The Boys of, um, Winter are back.

The Capilano College Blues baseball team has started preparing for its inaugural season in the B.C. Junior College League, which begins March 23.

"Because school ends in May you have to start early," explained Blues skipper Dave Empey.

"The schedule ends in the third week in May so it's hard to get more than 50 games in."

The Blues join Douglas, Malaspina, Kwantlen and Cariboo colleges in a

five-team baseball league that plays a 50-game schedule ending with a conference tournament in mid-May.

"The problem with starting this early is the weather," Empey noted, "but the Pacific Northwest doesn't get a lot of snow, it just rains. We've practiced outside in the winter when it's not raining."

For the past week, the Blues have practiced at their new home field, Parkgate Park, for an upcoming tournament at Pierce Junior College in Washington State, March 2 to 3.

Currently, Empey says there are 20

players on the Blues' roster, many of whom have played for his successful North Shore Twins teams.

"I'd say about half the players," Empey said.

Other players, like Alberta-born infielder Conner Irving, are out-of-province players who've come to pursue baseball careers at Capilano College under Empey's tutelage.

"It's the third year for the league and it's our first," said Empey, "I think it was important to get Cap involved and have another team in the Lower Mainland. ●"