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Special pullout section

Friday, September 12, 2008

8 Pages

Circulation 22,500

Mann Cup win special says Acton's Chapman

EAMONN MAHER
Staff Writer

For someone who has already won four National Lacrosse League titles by the age of 27, capturing his first Mann Cup still holds a special place for Acton native Sandy Chapman after his Brampton Excelsiors swept the New Westminster Salmonbellies for the Canadian major series championship on Tuesday evening.

"It's got to be right up there (with the NLL Champion's Cup wins) because when I was growing up, the Mann Cup was a trophy that everybody involved with lacrosse saw as being the greatest accomplishment," said Chapman, who now resides in Burlington.

"It's so much more grueling because you had to go through three best four out-of-seven series and it's a lot more different than the NLL, where it's just a one-game knockout in the final. For the Mann Cup, we play such a condensed season and it takes so much out of you, but that becomes sort of the fun part because you go so much emotionally in a short period of time."

Chapman, in his sixth year with the Excelsiors, joined the Brampton squad just after its last national title victory in 2002 and was on teams that lost in the finals twice in

Victoria, B.C.

The past three seasons, the Excels were eliminated by the Peterborough Lakers in the Ontario championship and faced their rivals again in 2008, roaring back from a 3-2 deficit in the series to earn their date with New Westminster.

"To finally beat Peterborough, well, it was a long time coming," Chapman added.

"They were a big monkey on our backs, so to beat them in a seven-game series was great. Then to turn around and have to play New Westminster was tough, even though we ended up sweeping them. We had developed such a rivalry with Peterborough that by the afternoon of the games you were so pumped up to play, but we didn't really have a hate on for New Westminster. Early in the games it took us a while to get going, but we had such a veteran-laden team with guys who had won the Mann Cup before that we were able to overcome that."

The 5-foot-9, 180-pound Chapman played his usual steady defensive role, getting to loose balls and starting up the transition game for Brampton, which featured several former and current Toronto Rock players, with whom Chapman won three Champion's Cups.

He looked like a sapling amongst some of the B.C. redwoods on the Salmonbellies, including 6-foot-10, 270-pound Dave Morgan.

"I don't know where they got some of these guys from. They were monsters," Chapman chuckled.

"For me, it was tough to know what to do at first when you're trying to defend against them because they were just ginormous. I know that a lot of our offensive guys are pretty banged up and I've got a bit of a charley horse, so we were glad to get it over with in four straight."

Chapman is in his second and final year of the University of Toronto's School of Nursing graduate program. He'll begin practices in November with the NLL's Rochester Knighthawks, who earned the league championship in 2007 but didn't make the playoffs this past season.



Acton's Sandy Chapman (5) of the Brampton Excelsiors rushes over to cover a New Westminster Salmonbellies' player during this week's Mann Cup Canadian senior men's lacrosse championship at the Powerade Centre in Brampton. Chapman didn't get any points in Brampton's four-game sweep but was an important part of an Excelsior defence that limited the opposition to just 19 goals in the series.

Photos by Bryon Johnson



Sandy Chapman (left) of the Brampton Excelsiors watches the ball slip away after being checked by a New Westminster foe.

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