

SPORTS & LEISURE

Former Sting coach Walters takes over as Raiders' boss

By **EAMONN MAHER**
Staff Writer

After eight seasons as associate coach of the Ontario Hockey League's Sarnia Sting, Greg Walters was looking for a different challenge and the Georgetown Raiders are his new project.

Raiders' owner Ted Nishi announced this week that the 39-year-old Walters will replace James Richmond as head coach and general manager of the Ontario Jr. A Hockey League club for next season.

Having grown up in the Leaside area of Toronto, Walters was looking to move back to the GTA with his wife and two young sons, and the Raiders were also in the mood for changes, after recently getting knocked out of the playoffs for the third year in a row by the Oakville Blades in five games.

"Home is Toronto, so we were going to make the move back at some point and I think now's the best time," said Walters.

"I look at this as an opportunity to run my own program and, yes, it's a step down in leagues, but it's a chance to be coach and general manager and to put together a staff that I'm really excited about."

Walters expects to announce the rest of his bench staff shortly and has already begun the recruiting process, with rookie camp scheduled for May 11-13 in Etobicoke.

The club expects to have about 10 returnees for next year and Richmond's assistants, Craig Teeple and Mike Manuel, also won't be back.

"Three-and-a-half years is a long time to be a coach in this league and J.R. was a fixture here. We appreciate what he's done and now it's time for a new phase," said Nishi.

"Greg has a steep learning curve ahead of him in his role as GM, but with his contacts, we're already getting OHL teams calling to get their players to work with him next year. We'll get a better feel of how things are when the rookie camp is finished."

Walters was a fourth-round draft pick of the Toronto Maple Leafs in 1990 after a 36-goal, 90-point season under legendary junior coach Brian Kilrea with the Ottawa 67's.

He went on to play 11 years in the minor pro

leagues as a rugged, defensively responsible winger under eventual NHL coaches such as Bruce Boudreau, Marc Crawford, Ron Low and John Tortorella.

Among Walter's pupils in Sarnia was current Tampa Bay Lightning star Steven Stamkos and Sting fans were so enamoured with their long-time assistant coach that he was given a standing ovation in a pre-game ceremony last Saturday prior to the last-place club's 8-3 victory over the Windsor Spitfires.

The season's largest crowd of 5,027 chanted "Thank you, Wally" during the last minute of the game.

"The big thing for me is character and commitment to the team and it's all about the kids to me and their goals and dreams, whether they want to go to college or play in the OHL," he said.

"I went to a couple of Georgetown's games in their last series and I thought Oakville was stronger and more skilled. That's something we'll have to address in the off-season."

The classy Richmond, meanwhile, likely won't be out of coaching for long, but said he'd like to take a break from hockey for a while.

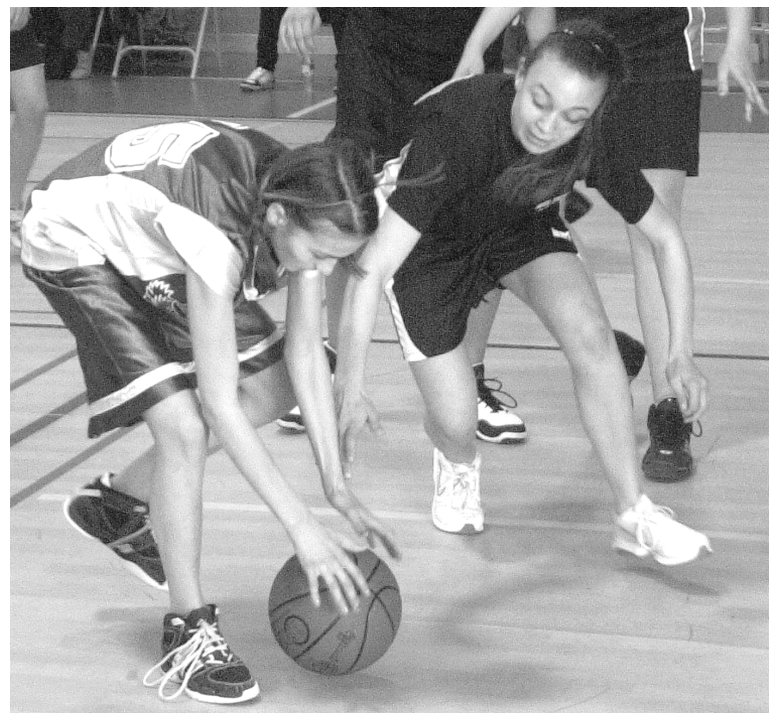
"I love being in Georgetown but I don't feel good about the way we finished considering we had about an .800 winning percentage in our four years here," he said.

"I hope to possibly move up to the OHL and get some interviews. Teaching is what I do best and I want to continue doing that."

HOCKEY NOTES: Christ the King's Jaguars are 1-1-0 to start the OFSAA AAA/AAAA boys' hockey championship in St. Catharines this week, losing to Orangeville 7-5 in their opener before beating Hamilton's Sherwood 3-2 Wednesday morning...Former Raider Andrew Marcoux of Rockwood was named Ontario University Athletics' East Conference rookie of the year for scoring 23 goals— third-highest in the league— as a member of the Nipissing Lakers' men's hockey team...Georgetown resident Dayna Kanis was a second-team OUA all-star for the University of Guelph Gryphons' women's hockey squad, as the fourth-year psychology major collected 11 goals and 20 assists in 25 games.



GREG WALTERS



Sydney Henry (right) of the St. Brigid Bears hustles for possession of the ball with a Holy Rosary player during the North Halton Catholic elementary school girls' basketball championship game Tuesday at St. Catherine of Alexandria in Georgetown South. Holy Rosary held off a spirited St. Brigid late rally to capture the North Halton title by a 33-32 score.

Photo by Eamonn Maher

Bears lose heartbreaker

By **HERB GARBUTT**
Metroland Media Group

The finalists and the outcome may have been predictable. How it unfolded certainly wasn't.

The Holy Rosary Hawks won their sixth consecutive North Halton girls' basketball title Tuesday by beating the St. Brigid Bears, their longtime rivals who have contested five of those championships. But the Hawks had to hang on for dear life for a 33-32 victory as the Bears rallied from a five-point deficit in the last 40 seconds, missing a shot at the buzzer that could have ended Holy Rosary's reign.

What made the nail-biting finish all the more incredible was how Holy Rosary dominated the opening half.

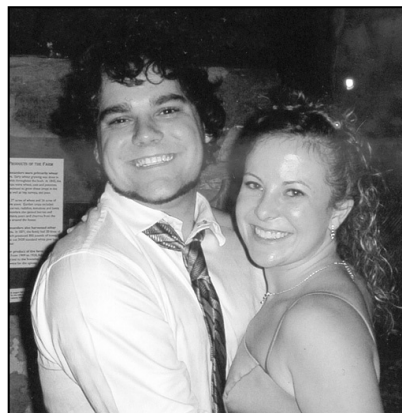
"They made every shot they took," said St. Brigid coach Richard Brown.

Meanwhile, St. Brigid, which had a distinct advantage in height, was held to just four points as the Hawks built a 17-4 lead by the half.

Holy Rosary extended its lead to 25-10 with just over three minutes to play in the third quarter and seemed to be on its way to an easy victory.

But St. Brigid fought its way back into the game thanks to a nine-point run, all scored by the Bears' Rachel Hollywood who finished

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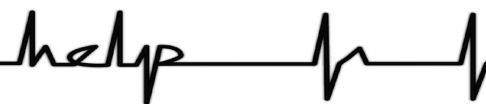
Alan and Cathy Snelling are very happy to announce the engagement of their daughter

Carrie Anne to Joe Murphy

son of Margaret Murphy and the late Dr. Denis Murphy.

Wedding to take place August, 2010

"As long as forever ~ my love will be true"



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