

SPORTS & LEISURE

Kovacevic makes case for World Cup inclusion

By **EAMONN MAHER**
Staff Writer

Talk about leaving a good first impression.

Halton Hills resident Jade Kovacevic made her debut recently for Canada's under-17 women's soccer team and presented a strong case for being included on the roster that will play in September's World Cup, scoring just a couple of minutes after entering the friendly against Japan in Florida.

The 16-year-old midfielder/striker was subbed into the scoreless game at halftime and upon receiving a pass, hammered a left-footed shot into the top of the net.

"I wasn't nervous, but I still can't believe (the goal) happened. It doesn't seem like it was real," said the Grade 11 Acton District High School student.

"Probably the nicest goal I've ever scored. There was a layoff outside the box and I just went for it. Primarily I'm right-footed, but I use both feet all the time and after a while you don't even think about it."

Canada won the game 2-1 and Kovacevic earned praise afterward from head coach Bryan Rosenfeld for her effectiveness at both ends of the pitch.

She could find out as soon as next week whether she'll play for the red and white at the under-17 World Cup in Trinidad & Tobago Sept. 5-25, but a busy soccer schedule this summer hasn't allowed for much time to look ahead.

Kovacevic was captain of the Ontario team that went undefeated and captured the gold medals at last week's Nutrilite under-16 girls' national championships in Newfoundland,

scoring once in a 5-0 victory over Quebec on Sunday.

She ended up with five goals at the tournament and it was her second Canadian title after winning as an under-14 for Ontario two years ago. But again, there was little time to celebrate, as she boarded a plane in Toronto Monday morning bound for Santiago, Chile for another training camp this week with the national under-17 side that includes three exhibition games with Chilean competition.

"This is our last opportunity to select players before we go into the final preparation phase for the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup," said Rosenfeld.

"The three matches (in five days) will provide our staff with the best opportunity to see the players perform."

For Kovacevic, just getting a couple of days off is a luxury in what's been a hectic summer. With Team Ontario, she went on a tour of the U.S. to play in exhibition matches against colleges and universities, then was invited to a 10-day camp with the national side at the Ontario Soccer Association's complex in Vaughan.

In between, she plays for an elite under-16 girls' team in Oakville that lost to rival Burlington earlier this month in the Ontario Cup quarterfinals, which was followed by a week-long camp with the provincial squad that involved three training sessions per day.

"It's been non-stop for the past few weeks, so it's nice to get a few days off at home," she said last week.

"If I perform well at the next camp, I have a very good chance at going to the World Cup. There's a bit of pressure involved, but I'm used to it."



Local native Jade Kovacevic is vying for selection to the Canadian roster that will play in the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup in Trinidad & Tobago in September after capturing gold for Ontario at last week's national championships. *Submitted photo*



Tide win big

Brampton Bulldogs' Matthew Bills (10) scores his team's only touchdown of the game against North Halton Crimson Tide at Creditview Park in Brampton during the recent Brampton Day games. North Halton's Andrew Kaspiris moves in a little too late, but the Tide rolled to a 20-6 win in Ontario Minor Football League action. *Photo by Bryon Johnson*

Three Fins, coach headed to Ont. Summer Games

Three Georgetown athletes and their coach will be in Sudbury for Ontario Summer Games in August.

The Games run from Aug. 11-13 at Laurentian University and are the largest multi-sport event in the province, involving over 3,500 participants competing in 32 different sports.

Blue Fins' head coach Mike Thompson, 14-year-old Mitchell Krafczek, 16-year-old Karl Massey and 12-year-old Matt Fox will compete in the three-day swim meet. Two other Blue Fins, Elizabeth Skuriat and Loren O'Brien Egeborg, were also selected but declined due to personal reasons.

"This is fantastic," said Thompson.

"HHBF has ever had anyone on the Summer Games team, now to have three people and to be chosen as the head coach is a great honor. This is a great ending to a very successful year."

More details can be found on the HHBF website through Thompson's blog: www.haltonhills-bluefins.ca.

Golf roundup

North Halton hosts event

Several local-area players are entered in next week's Golf Association of Ontario Senior Women's Amateur Championship to be held at The Club at North Halton Aug. 4-6.

The 54-hole tournament begins Wednesday and two-time defending champion Ivy Steinberg of the Newmarket area is among the 112 golfers age 50 and over in the field.

Among the North Halton club members in the draw are Debbie Campbell, Valerie Ferguson, Julie Green, Patty Hall, Mary Ann Hayward, Gloria Sinclair and Rockwood's Lori Madill.

For more info visit the website www.gao.ca.

Ten-year-old Nicklaus Naumovski of Halton Hills got better with each round at the Callaway Junior World Golf Championships at the Welk Resort course in San Diego, California earlier this month, finishing in a tie for 16th in the boys' 9-10 age group.

Naumovski, a Brampton Golf Club member, recorded rounds of 68-66-62 for a 10-over-par total on the par-62 course.



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