



## Darling signs on with Orange

By **EAMONN MAHER**  
*Staff Writer*

Syracuse University women's volleyball head coach Jing Pu often visits Canada in search of student-athletes who'll represent the Orange well both on the court and in the classroom.

So, one year after acquiring the signature on a National Letter of Intent from local resident Lindsay McCabe, Pu extended a scholarship offer to another Georgetown District High School student for 2011.

Limehouse's Maggie Darling caught Pu's attention for her play at the net with the Georgetown Impact club volleyball team and was further impressed by the fact that the aspiring medical school student is just 16 years old and already set to graduate from Grade 12 in June.

"Because of my age, (Pu) thought I was in Grade 11," said the 6-foot-1 middle blocker.

"I've been grouped with older people ever since Grade 1 because I skipped that year of school, so basically I feel like

I'm 17 anyway."

Pu, who has guided Syracuse teams to eight 20-win seasons in his 15 years there, tapped his northern talent pipeline for no fewer than eight Canadian players this past season, including six from southern Ontario.

McCabe enjoyed a superb freshman campaign with the Orange, leading the team in blocks, and Pu is anxious to see whether Darling can make the same immediate impact this fall after she signed a letter of intent.

"Age is not an issue in (Darling's) case," he said.

"The way we look at it, if she's one year younger, then she has more potential to develop into an all-around player. Every individual is different. She has demonstrated strong setting and passing skills and I look forward to helping her develop those skills. Whether she is able to step in right away all depends on how quickly she makes the transition to the collegiate level, and the Big East is the top level in the country."

It didn't take long after mak-

ing her official visit to the campus in October before Darling committed to Syracuse and while the school didn't offer her desired kinesiology program, she'll likely register in pre-med courses.

"I really had to think about it because I wanted to go away somewhere for school and this was a good fit," she added.

"I didn't even know (Syracuse) were scouting me.

"(Playing alongside McCabe) definitely helped, but it's only four-and-a-half hours away, so I'm not that far from home. I basically decided to go there a week after they offered it to me."

Darling doesn't usually play middle blocker with the GDHS senior Rebels, who are 8-0 in Halton league play this season and considered a top contender for the provincial girls' AAAA championship March 8-9 in Newmarket.

She captained the Rebel squad that finished runner-up to Kitchener's Forest Heights at the 2010 finals and despite losing setter Tory McCracken and middle blocker Sarah Chapin,



Georgetown District High School's Maggie Darling powers a shot past a Burlington Nelson player during a recent Halton league match. Darling will attend Syracuse University next season on a volleyball scholarship.

*Photo by Eamonn Maher*

who are both first-year starters at York University and the University of Toronto, respectively, coach Kyle Stewart's side has a 20-0 overall record with

two tournament victories to its credit.

"We're going for first this time and we've got the team to do it," Darling declared.



Georgetown Raiders' forward Josh Burnell scrambles for a loose puck in front of Burlington netminder Adrian Volpe during the Cougars' 7-3 home win Sunday.

*Photo by Eamonn Maher*

## Raiders waste good start in 7-3 loss

Not exactly finishing the regular season with a flourish, the Georgetown Raiders have a couple of weeks to turn around their fortunes before the playoffs begin.

A 7-3 loss to the first-place Cougars in Burlington Sunday afternoon exposed Georgetown's shortcomings in all phases of the game, as the visitors let an excellent opening period go to waste.

Since Dec. 6, the 30-14-3 Raiders have posted an 8-7-1 mark and are in jeopardy of starting the Ontario Jr. A Hockey League post-season on the road after slipping to sixth spot in the OJHL's North/West conference.

With three regular-season games

remaining, the Raiders still could surpass Stouffville and Oakville in the standings, and they'll face those two red-hot teams this weekend in crucial contests.

The Blades, winners of 17 of their past 18 starts, host Georgetown Friday evening, before the Raiders entertain Stouffville Saturday at the Alcott Arena at 7:30 p.m.

The Spirit is also on an impressive run with just one loss in its last 14 games.

Despite outshooting the Cougars 19-6 in Sunday's first period and taking a 1-0 lead on a Josh Burnell marker, the Raiders had a late goal called back and pro-

ceeded to get scored on twice 15 seconds apart early in the middle frame.

After cutting the Burlington lead to 3-2 six minutes into the final stanza on a David Friedmann power-play tally, the Raiders broke down defensively on the next shift and crumbled from there, finishing the season series against the Cougars with a 1-2-1 record.

On Saturday night, the Raiders scored four times in a nine-minute outburst during the second period to post a 5-3 triumph over the Buffalo Jr. Sabres.

Duston Hebebrand (2), Evan Rodrigues, Friedmann and Travis Fulton had the home side's goals.

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