

SPORTS & LEISURE

Bulldogs end affiliation with Brampton Excels

By **EAMONN MAHER**
Staff Writer

The Halton Hills Bulldogs have a new neighbour in the Ontario Jr. B Lacrosse League as the Brampton Excelsiors are returning to Memorial Arena after a lengthy absence.

The Ontario Lacrosse Association approved the entry at its recent annual general meeting and the team will begin play in the spring.

However, just because there will be another Jr. B franchise in close proximity to Halton Hills, it doesn't mean that the Bulldogs will see much of the new Excelsiors at all.

One of the conditions on the approval of the new franchise was that Brampton would not play alongside Halton Hills, Mimico, Mississauga and Oakville in the OJBL's South East Division, but in the Mid West with Orangeville, Elora, Guelph and Owen Sound.

"We don't want to lose any games with the Green Gaels," said Bulldogs' general manager Mike Hancock, whose club has met the Bowmanville-based Gaels in the past five post-seasons.

"Bringing in another team in the Eastern Conference would have jeopardized our home and home with the Gaels, which is part of the current scheduling format."

The Brampton Jr. A Excelsiors and the Jr. B Bulldogs enjoyed a strong affiliation for several years, but that relationship soured last year. Hancock didn't seem concerned about the split, pointing out that several Halton Hills products have graduated to the Jr. A level, while just two Brampton residents, Connor Sellars and Mike Licata, played for the Ontario-finalist Bulldogs in 2011.

"We wish Brampton the best of luck and

understand the challenges that lie ahead when trying to field a competitive Jr. A and Jr. B team, given the talent pool that exists," he added.

"We're looking at shifting our affiliation with the intention of moving our players into a system that gives them the best chance to move on to the (National Lacrosse League). A centre like Orangeville could be a good fit for us with their proven track record of developing NLL-ready talent. (Current Toronto Rock players) Glen Bryan and Rob Hellyer are really good examples of that."

According to Mike Miles, the head coach and general manager for the new Excelsior Jr. B entry, players who left Brampton after their minor careers will have the option of returning to Brampton.

"Any player's rights that are owned by another Junior B club have a one year right," said Miles. "It's their option, but for this year only."

The idea of Halton Hills moving up to become a Jr. A centre has also been floated over the years. Hancock said the recent success of the Jr. B Bulldogs, who have reached the Ontario final in three of the past five years and won the Canadian championship in 2010, would be the next logical step from a competitive standpoint.

"We're definitely between a rock and a hard place there," Hancock remarked.

"The Jr. A council is not expanding until they can add two more teams (from the current 12) and they want to stay at an even number of teams from what we've been told. There is strong talk that one team will not be operating in 2012, however, even that does not appear to have opened a door for us. I know we could compete in Jr. A and maybe that fact is truthfully our biggest obstacle."

—With files from *The Brampton Guardian*

McKenzie named OUA all-star

Georgetown's Donnie McKenzie had a nice send-off to his four-year career on the gridiron at Wilfrid Laurier University by being named as an Ontario Second Team All-Star this past week.

The 6-foot-6, 310-pound tackle was the anchor of the Golden Hawks' offensive line this season that allowed the

fewest sacks of any team in the OUA.

An economics major, the Georgetown District High School grad earned the reputation as a punishing run-blocker and impressed scouts at the Canadian Football League's Evaluation

See **MCKENZIE**, pg. 33



Blue Fins shine in Milton's new pool

The Milton Marlins hosted the first swim meet in their new home at the recently opened Sports Centre pool and the Halton Hills Blue Fins were declared champs at the Fall Dash4Cash event. Above, Blue Fin Shannon Jickling, 12, churns up the water as she competes in the mixed 12 & under 100m breaststroke event. She finished third with a time of 1:41:03. Below, Erika Charbonneau, 10, churns her way to a sixth-place finish in the mixed 12 & under 50m freestyle event in a time of 0:43.95. The Blue Fins took top spot in the overall team points standings for the five-club meet, prevailing over the runner-up Marlins 4,570 to 4,382. Multiple race winners for the Blue Fins were Emma Fender, age 12, Keri-Lyn Copeland, 13, Bronte McMaster, 14, Aleksandar Plackoski, 11, Ted Mosoi, 11, Matthew Fox, 14, and Kyle Haas, 16.

Photos by *Graham Paine/Metroland West Media Group*



STAYING HOME THIS WEEKEND?... SHOP LOCAL



Shopping local saves you money. Out of town shops have done a good job of convincing us all that sole traders = expensive, but the evidence just isn't there to back this up. If you add in travel, parking costs, fees to transport larger items home and your time, the overall cost is often much higher. SHOP LOCAL, SHOP HALTON HILLS!

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