

Cuthbertson tuning up for Mongol marathon

By EAMONN MAHER
Staff Writer

Preparing for the longest horse race in the world is a logistical challenge in itself, never mind the 1,000-km distance over Mongolian plains that Georgetown's Sarah Cuthbertson will have to cover.

The 27-year-old Cuthbertson is among 43 endurance riders from 15 different countries who'll compete in the sixth edition of the Mongol Derby, which recreates Ghengis Khan's ancient horse messenger system, beginning Aug. 6.

And there are stipulations that each competitor must adhere to, such as only being able to carry five kilograms of gear. Cuthbertson also won't even be able to use her own horse, as the riders have to switch to a different semi-wild Mongolian horse every 40 kilometres.

"It does feel like every time I have it together, I think of more things I need for the trip and I will likely be making changes to my pack down to the last minute," said Cuthbertson, an executive assistant for Chartright Air Group at Pearson Airport.

"The organizers have done a good job at mapping out when and what to do so I have been able to follow along with those. I feel pretty logistically prepared, but I know there will be some bumps in my plans, which are just a matter of luck, so I am trying to remain flexible too."

This is Cuthbertson's fourth year in the sport after getting hooked by local resident Linda Klarner, who won the overall novice points award in the Ontario Competitive Trail Riding Association 2012 series. With more than 500 competition miles to date, Cuthbertson feels she's ready for the challenge.

Last year won most of the events she entered and earned the championship for Part Arab in the OCTRA series.



Sarah Cuthbertson won't have her usual horse Bentley when competing in this summer's Mongol Derby as she'll be riding 25 different semi-wild Mongolian ponies in a relay system.

Photo courtesy Wendy Webb Photography

She has also hired a personal trainer to help prepare physically for the ride. Riders often eat and sleep with the Mongolian families in traditional Gers.

"The riding is the least of my worries going into the race," said the Georgetown District High School graduate.

"I am most concerned about how my body will react to the different food, altitude and jet lag. Of course, there is a large risk of injury associated with the riding too, but that is supposed to be the fun part and luck plays a large role in riding success. All I can do is ride my best and keep a positive attitude."

Another requirement of the race is that the entrants must raise at least \$1,800 for a charitable organization, including about \$900 for the official charity, Cool Earth.

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Halton Hills Bulldog Jayson Crawford levels Oakville Buzz forward Keyan McQueen in front of the Bulldogs net in a Jr. B lacrosse matchup Friday at the Toronto Rock Athletic Centre. The host Buzz won 11-3.

Graham Paine/Metroland West Media Group

Bulldogs scuffling along

Although reinforcements are on the way, the Halton Hills Bulldogs find themselves in unfamiliar territory just seven games into the 2014 Ontario Jr. B Lacrosse League campaign.

The 4-3 Bulldogs lost just twice in each of the last two regular seasons, posting identical 17-2-1 records, but they've already dropped two games to their divisional rivals from Oakville after the Buzz dominated an undermanned Halton Hills squad 11-3 Friday night at the Toronto Rock Athletic Centre.

Facing another South East Division foe at home Saturday, the 'Dogs downed the Mimico Mountaineers 9-7 after trailing 5-3 at one stage.

Fifth-year defender Jayson Crawford

led the charge offensively Saturday with four goals and two assists. Tyler Nieuwendyk, Matt Hodgins, Jesse Oliver, Josh Oliver and Jamie Batten also scored for the hosts and Dustin Hanzelka earned the win in goal in front of 275 spectators.

Crawford, Josh Oliver and Batten were the lone Bulldog marksmen in the loss Friday in Oakville, in which the Buzz led 3-0 before the game was even four minutes old.

Halton Hills has a busy week ahead as the club plays host to the Mississauga Tomahawks Thursday at 8 p.m., followed by a trip to Mimico Friday evening. The 7-1 Green Gaels of Clarington make their annual trip to Georgetown Saturday, with a 7:30 p.m. start time at the Alcott Arena.

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