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REPEATED CHAMPIONS! The Grade 6 representatives of the Halton elementary school champion McKenzie-Smith boys' volleyball team had their time to shine at the recent E.J. James and Centennial tourneys. They took the E.J. James title and were finalists at Centennial. Front row, from left: Paul Schiller, Craig Lockwood and Steve Barens. Back row: Andrew Martin, Darren Banks, Thomas Mahon, coach Dave Walker, Mitchell Moore and Ryan Weatherall. (Doug Harrison photo)

Stang boys are v-ball champs again

BY DOUG HARRISON
The Acton Tanner

Maybe losing all but one player from the 1994 Halton champion elementary school boys' volleyball team come the fall won't hurt the McKenzie-Smith Mustangs that much after all.

Certainly not if this year's crop of Grade 6 players can carry a recent title at the E.J. James tourney in Oakville and a second place finish at Centennial's event into the 1995 season.

Coach Dave Walker's team of nine was masterful in compiling a 22-5 overall mark against competition from Milton, Burlington and Oakville.

"We made few mistakes and had strong communication," Walker said of the E.J. James victory. "The other teams may have had stronger offences, but they made tactical errors that we took advantage of."

The Stangs were led by Craig Lockwood, who was named the tournament MVP. Walker said he

developed strength as a leader and displayed his skills as a setter and playmaker with the Halton champs.

"He's probably one of the best Grade 6 players in Halton who I saw this year. He has talent and uses his head," Walker praised.

The locals went 12-4 in the E.J. James event, sweeping six of their eight opponents — Stewarttown (15-13, 15-5), E.J. James II (15-7, 15-4), Centennial (15-4, 15-13), New Central (15-4, 15-6), Rolling Meadows (15-4, 15-5) and E.J. James I (15-4, 15-12).

"We concentrated on defence, setting and bumping and strong basics, and that's what won it for us," Walker, in his third-year coaching, explained.

Meanwhile, Walker may now regret now playing W.I. Dick in a pair of exhibition games the night before the Centennial tourney.

Prior to winning two straight, the Mustangs had defeated Dick in their last two encounters.

But this riled Dick, who ran over the Stangs 15-9 in the final.

"They (Dick) were psyched up. Maybe we came in overconfident, having won four straight games against them," Walker pondered.

"But the guys were all over the court, sacrificing the body and never giving up."

To open the tourney, Walker and Co. split with Stewarttown 4-15, 15-12' before sweeping E.J. James (15-7, 15-7) and Milton's Sam Sherratt (15-9, 15-9).

In the semifinal against Centennial of Georgetown, the Stangs were down 6-1, but came back to win 15-12. Much like the Grade 7 and 8 members of the Mustangs, the Grade 6s often fought adversity to succeed.

"I stressed the team concept all year," admitted Walker. "We win and lose as a team. Having the Seniors as role models in showing what a lot of practice can do, I think it set the tone for the whole season."

"The guys (6s) believed in themselves and knew what they could accomplish."

Redmen ousted 3-2 on penalty kicks

BY DOUG HARRISON
The Acton Tanner

They began the season losing in the last 30 seconds and watched it end on the last kick.

The Acton Redmen Senior boys' soccer team scored more goals in their final '95 Halton high school game (five) on Thursday than they had through six regular season contests (four).

Down 2-0 to the Milton Mustangs in the first half, the Redmen showed character in forging back to even the game on Todd Chumley and Steve Bottero markers.

Bottero, with his second of the game, put the Redmen up 3-2 in overtime, but as was the norm with one-goal Redmen advantages this year, its life span was short.

Milton stormed back to knot the game at 3-3 to force penalty kicks.

Redmen coach Colin Bain fielded Bottero, Scott McIntyre, Darrell Bridge, Tom Ford and Matt George for the showdown, with the latter two finding the net. However, the Mustangs went one better to advance to the semifinals yesterday (Tuesday).

"We played an excellent game. It was our best team game and I

could see the improvement of our team," says Bain, whose Redmen finished the season without a win at 0-3-4. "One team had to lose and unfortunately it was us."

Chumley's goal was off a direct corner kick as he saw an opening in the corner and hammered it in. Bain says the Stang keeper saw the ball coming, but he wasn't quick enough to get a piece of the sizzling shot.

"At this level," Bain states, "most of the goals scored are opportunistic ones. There are few goals that come from elaborate moves. It's either a mistake in the midfield, a failed corner kick or poor clearance by the defence."

Knowing his backline was solid, Bain wanted to see his team attack, and they did.

But what impressed the 23-year Halton coach most during the year was his team's ability to maintain their composure and game plan.

"Soccer is a game of contact and aggression," explained Bain. "Once you lose your composure, the whole team falls apart."

"On two or three occasions this season we could have lost it, but we concentrated on the game."

Rams look to repeat

The North-Halton Material Handling Tyke Rams lacrosse season starts tonight (Wednesday) at 6:30 pm at the Acton Community Centre.

The defending Zone 8 champions from last year hope to repeat again this year.

Kyle McDonald is the lone returnee from the '94 club.

Rookie Rams are Braden Artem, Greg Black, Treth MacDougall, Denis Hunak, Garrett Williams, Brendan Moffatt, Greg Henry and Matthew Lyons.

George Artem will be behind the bench with assistance from Edgar Williams and Reg Henry.

The Rams play at home Wednesdays at 6:30 pm on May 17 and 24; June 7 and 28 and July 5.



McKenzie-Smith tracker Andy Kilmer finishes a 4 x 400-metre relay at practice on Friday. He races tomorrow (Thursday) at Nelson. (Doug Harrison photo)


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