

# SPORTS & LEISURE

## Local resident to skipper Lobos football squad

**EAMONN MAHER**  
Staff Writer

The former owner of Atlantis Athletic Fitness Centre in Georgetown has taken over the reins as head coach of an arena football league expansion franchise in Laredo, Texas for the upcoming season.

Lawrence Fisher sold his interest in the local fitness centre this past fall in order to assume his new role with the Lobos, who will play in the six-team Intense Football League, with teams located along the U.S. Gulf Coast.

"I'm so happy to be in a city where the team has already been embraced because—as everyone knows— football and Texas are synonymous, like ice hockey is in Georgetown," said Fisher while on a recent quick visit back to Halton Hills to celebrate the second birthday of his son, Dante.

"I've been coaching as an assistant for so long and this is an opportunity to make my family back home proud."

A native of Clearwater, Florida, the 42-year-old Fisher attended Jarvis Collegiate high school in Toronto, then went to Eastern Michigan University, where he played defensive back for the Eagles' football team and graduated with a communications degree. After a free-agent tryout with the NFL's Detroit Lions, he dabbled as a guest coach with the CFL's Hamilton Tiger Cats and Toronto Argonauts in the early 1990s before catching on with the York University football program as a receivers' coach in 1995.



Part-time local resident Lawrence Fisher was recently introduced as the new head coach of the expansion Laredo Lobos' arena football league franchise in south Texas and his two-year-old son Dante was also on hand for the press conference. The Lobos begin their regular season in a couple of weeks. *Submitted photo*

From there, Fisher went on to coach at a number of high schools, club level, some U.S. colleges and even in Europe for a year, before interviewing for the defensive coordinator's job with the Toronto Phantoms arena league team in 2002. Unfortunately for Fisher, the Phantoms folded not long afterward, but during his brief stay in Toronto, he met a cheerleader for the team from Georgetown named Melanie Booth—now a consultant for Accenture—and the couple was married in June 2003.

Fisher served as the defensive co-ordinator for the Odessa, Texas franchise for the past two seasons, helping the Roughnecks post a 16-1 record in 2005, with their lone defeat coming in the conference championship game.

The IFL was re-established this year as a development stage for the Arena Football League, with Fisher making the jump with Odessa owners Glenn McCampbell and Pierre Deschesnes to head up the team in Laredo, which is located on the U.S.-

Mexico border.

Fisher will work long days until the start of the IFL's regular season on April 20. Last weekend, 100 players were offered a one-day tryout to try to make the team, drawing NFL cast-offs, regular Joes off the street and even three former American Gladiator TV show regulars.

"Arena football brings back an Ironman mentality that's been lost in the NFL because everything is so specialized in that league," added Fisher. "We've got players who have to play on both sides of the ball (offensively and defensively), meaning that they have to have toughness and endurance. They're trying to make our team and get game film footage from me so that they can go on and excel at the next level."

This is the 20th anniversary season for the AFL, a product that has struggled in many markets, but has shown to be successful in several others.

"If you had told me 20 years ago that Arena Football was going to expand the way it has with NFL teams buying into the concept, most people would say you're crazy," Fisher said. "It has created more jobs for people and given players we call 'tweeners' the opportunity to get noticed and move up to bigger and better things. But right now, we are working hard toward bringing a championship to a championship city like Laredo."

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Georgetown's Sports Unlimited Raiders scored a comeback 2-1 win over host Aurora Wednesday to win the 2006 OMHA minor atom AE Group 1-3 championship as they took the best-of-five series 3-1. Members of the team (front row, from left) are: Tyler Anderson, Matthew Hopson, Josh Fera and Joe Wallace. Second row: Matthew Carr, Blair Davies, Callum Biehn, head coach Murray Anderson, Cory Highfield, Kevan Hadad, Stevie Rosa. Third row: Mark Bowen, Brad Ranson, Jake Spence, Adam Dobis, Adam Charalambides, Dane Firhoj, Nicholas Hale. Back row: Assistant coach Gord Carr, manager Wendy Highfield, trainer Greg Biehn, assistant coach Dave Hopson, goalie coach Bob Spence.

## Atom AA squad forces game five Minor Atom, Bantam AEs claim OMHA championships

Two Georgetown Raider teams sewed up Ontario Minor Hockey Association championships on Wednesday evening and another is poised to win one on home ice at the Mold-Masters SportsPlex tonight.

The Minor Atom additional entry rep Sports Unlimited Raiders closed out their series with the Aurora Tigers with a 2-1 road victory, winning the best-of-5 matchup 3-1. Jake Spence potted the winning goal in the third period for Georgetown to clinch the OMHA Group 1-3 crown.

Like the minor atom AEs, the Georgetown Goebelle MacAdam Alex-

ander Bantam AE Raiders lost the first game of their final series, but rallied with three straight wins over the Caledon Hawks to capture the OMHA Group 1 title.

Game 4 on Wednesday at the Mayfield Arena was never in doubt as the Raiders took a 2-0 first period lead and dominated all facets of the contest to post an 8-2 win. Brandon Usher (2), Jacob Krane, Dylan Hanzelka, Dylan Chalmers, Cam Maltby, Mark Giordano and Patrick White all found the back of the Caledon net for Georgetown.

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