

SPORTS & LEISURE

Sold-out ceremony at North Halton sees Lapointe enter golf hall of fame

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Most inductees into a hall of fame have usually long since finished playing their sport when their day in the spotlight comes along, but Georgetown resident Mary Ann Lapointe hasn't shown signs of slowing down at the age of 47.

The North Halton Golf & Country Club member was officially inducted into the Canadian Golf Hall of Fame on Saturday at her home clubhouse in a sold-out ceremony of 135 people as she became the 61st member of that hallowed fraternity. Regarded as one of the best female amateur golfers in North America, Lapointe continues to add to her lengthy list of provincial and national titles, including the Golf Association of Ontario Women's Match Play Championships last week in Belleville.

"You couldn't ask for a better ambassador for Canada and for women's amateur golf," said Judith Allan-Kyrinis, a friend and playing opponent of Lapointe's who was one of the evening's guest speakers. "What separates Mary Ann apart from the rest of us I think is her inner drive and what's between her ears. She has the ability to focus under pressure, whether she's chasing down the leader or if leading the tournament herself."

Many of those in attendance Saturday were in the Toronto area for this week's Royale Cup National Women's Amateur Championship at the Granite Club in Stouffville, a tournament Lapointe has won four times. Often more than twice the age of her opposition, the native of Lachine, Que. is sometimes referred to by her peers as "Mom" or "legend in waiting," in deference to 73-year-old Marlene Streit of Unionville, who is still an exceptional player.

"One fault that I've had is a lack of belief in my abilities," Lapointe said. "Even though I doubted myself, I guess I had enough sense to surround myself with people who did believe in me—family, friends, caddies—Dave (Mulholland) and Joey (Bush) have been a godsend."

Bush, who hauled Lapointe's golf bag in one of the latter's career highlight victories, the 2005 U.S. Women's Mid-Amateur championship in Houston, was a surprise guest speaker at the induction



Local artist Reg Finlayson presented Mary Ann Lapointe with a portrait that will hang in the North Halton Golf & Country Club. Lapointe was inducted into the RCGA's Canadian Golf Hall of Fame at the North Halton club in a ceremony held on Saturday evening, joining journalist Lorne Rubenstein as the 2007 inductees.

Photo by Eamonn Maher

ceremony, organized by the Royal Canadian Golf Association. The caddy's job description included several ground rules, including not talking to Lapointe's ball while on the course.

"Be on time, keep up and shut up," recalled Bush, an Air Canada employee who also served as the hall of famer's personal travel agent. "It's that last command that brings me here tonight. At last, my chance to have my say."

Also addressing the audience was one of Lapointe's three older brothers, John Hayward, a golf pro who has been her coach for the past 16 years. Lapointe thanked her teenage daughters, Kelly and Robyn, along with husband Richard for their sacrifices during her golf career. Her parents traveled up from Hilton Head, S.C. for the ceremony as well.

"Mom and dad kept a very important

balance of being super supportive without being overbearing," she added. "They simply provided us with the opportunity and it was up to us to participate. My love of practice definitely came from my dad."

Lapointe was presented with her hall of fame plaque by Worden Teasdale, chairman of the Canadian Golf Hall of Fame's selection committee. A copy of that plaque will soon be displayed at the hall of fame, located at Glen Abbey Golf Course in Oakville.

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At the 72-hole Canadian women's amateur tourney this week in Stouffville, Lapointe turned in a one-over-par 73 on Tuesday and was three shots off the lead at press time.

(Eamonn Maher can be reached at emaher@independentfreepress.com)

Bulldogs put up a fight in series opener

Facing a team that hasn't lost a game all season, the Halton Hills Bulldogs were expected to be the latest roadkill on the Clarington Green Gaels' path to a national Jr. B box lacrosse championship.

But the Bulldogs certainly didn't just roll over in game one on Sunday night of their best-of-5 Ontario Lacrosse Association Eastern Conference playoff series, dropping a tightly contested 8-5 decision in Bowmanville.

Trailing 6-5 late in the second period, the Bulldogs thought they had tied the score on a Pat Saunders' rip as the ball apparently struck the middle bar inside the net, but no goal was counted by the officials. The visitors were unable to find the mark in the final frame, which is usually their strongest period, allowing the Gaels to improve to 27-0-0 in playoff and regular season action this year.



"(The Green Gaels) certainly have a great team, and we always respect the teams we play, but I think we respected them too much," Bulldogs' coach Blaine McCauley said of game one.

"With the year we've had, we're not satisfied with just putting in a good effort. You have to give credit to (Clarington) with a season they've had, but people aren't giving us enough credit. We didn't make it here because we were lucky and we deserve to be here just as much as they do."

Using their overall team size advantage, the Gaels gave veteran Bulldog goalie Manny Hundal a rough ride, running into him on a number of occasions before a tussle broke out between the sides with about six minutes left in the middle period.

J.J. Laforet tallied twice for the 'Dogs, with Greg Henry, Adam McGourty and Andrew Marcoux netting one each. Tim Laidlaw added three assists.

Game two of the series will be played tonight (Wednesday) on the B pad at the Mold-Masters SportsPlex beginning at 8 p.m.

A fan bus for game three in Bowmanville on Thursday night will leave the SportsPlex at 6:15 p.m. Cost is \$10 per person, which does not include admission to the game.

If a fourth game is required, it will take place Saturday night in Georgetown. Game five, if necessary, would be played Sunday night in Bowmanville.

In the OLA Jr. B Western Conference final, Six Nations led Windsor 1-0 heading into Tuesday night's second game.

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