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**FIRE RIPS THROUGH CLUBHOUSE:** At left, firefighters survey the remains of what's believed to be the pro shop area of the clubhouse following Tuesday morning's fire at the Oakville Executive Golf Course. Above inset, flames continue to burn strong about two hours after firefighters first arrived on the Fourth Line scene.

GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION

## Golf clubhouse gutted by fire

*Arson suspected*

By **Krissie Rutherford**  
SPECIAL TO THE CHAMPION

Police believe the fire that gutted the Oakville Executive Golf Course clubhouse — which is on the Milton/Oakville border — early Tuesday morning may have been set on purpose.

Tuesday afternoon, Halton Regional Police issued a news release stating evidence at the scene of the Fourth Line clubhouse "suggested that the fire was not accidental in nature."

Police and the Ontario Fire Marshal's Office began their criminal investigation Tuesday, sifting through rubble looking for clues that may shed light on what started the blaze.

The fire began at about 2 a.m. Tuesday.

Firefighters from the Milton Fire Department arrived first on the scene, followed by Oakville firefighters.

Milton Capt. Mark Cross said he arrived to find the clubhouse "fully involved. There were flames 30 feet in the air."

Since the building was unsafe to enter, it was simply a matter of pouring water on the blaze, Cross said. He added it's hard to say how long it took until the fire was out.

"Everything goes in slow motion."

Despite the destroyed clubhouse and police tape closing off the surrounding area, golfers were teeing off regularly at the 18-hole course, which remained open Tuesday.

Only the nine-hole course on the site, Angel's View, was closed.

"The golf course is running as normal," said owner Harold Meyers. "We're doing everything we can."

Meyers rushed to the scene early Tuesday morning after the alarm company called to tell him a smoke alarm had gone off.

He arrived to find his clubhouse engulfed in flames.

"I could see, you know, the sky lit up from a distance. My wife was driving and I just couldn't believe it. I was shocked," he said.

"By the time we arrived, the fire department was already on scene fighting a fire that was beyond their control. Within a matter of a few hours the clubhouse had completely burnt down."

Firefighters from both Milton and Oakville responded to the call at 2:25 a.m., said Oakville Fire Deputy Chief Brian Durdin.

The fire was under control after about an hour, Durdin said, but it wasn't until about 6 a.m. that all of the hot spots were out.

• see TRAILER on page A15

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