

SPORTS

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GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION

B.C. BOUND: Lindsay Smith (left) and Samantha Moase are part of the E.C. Drury field hockey team that headed out yesterday for a seven-day competitive tour of British Columbia.

Challenging year ahead for 'Hawks

Big holes to fill up front for young Milton squad

By Steve LeBlanc
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Dean Piett isn't denying that his youthful IceHawks have some challenging times ahead. And an early-season stretch that includes games with veteran clubs like the Oakville Blades and defending league champion Kingston Voyageurs — whom Milton opens its expanded 56-game 2009/10 campaign against tomorrow night (on the road) — certainly won't allow the rookies time to ease into the revamped Ontario Jr. A League.



Nevertheless, the IceHawks' owner, president and general manager heads into the new season with an encouraging air.

"We're a young team, but we've got some talented players and once we get past the learning curve I think we'll be all right."

That may be a somewhat optimistic outlook, given that the IceHawks have lost most of the forwards that powered their sixth-place finish last year, including 38-point producer Tyler Stothers, who just recently opted to join the defending Sutherland Cup (Jr. B) champion Brantford Expositors.

But Piett believes much of the departing firepower will be replenished via a handful of promising midget graduates.

Most notable among them are Ben Walsh and Andrew Radjenovic, offensive standouts with the

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Rusk takes over as IceHawks' bench boss

There'll be a familiar face behind the IceHawks' bench this season, just not the one originally expected.

Recently hired to take the reins for 2009/10, Rob McDougall has decided that with work commitments the head coaching mantle would be just too much to take on. He's opted instead to assume a scouting post with the local Jr. A club.

Thus owner Dean Piett has hired native Miltonian Mike Rusk — who served with the team as an assistant under Randy Novak when Piett first took over the team two years ago — to lead the IceHawks.

A ninth-round draft pick of the Chicago Blackhawks in the 1993 NHL Entry Draft, the former OHL defenceman recently moved back to the area after a lengthy pro career that was wrapped up with the Central Hockey League's Fort Worth Brahmas.

Hired Monday afternoon, the 34-year-old said he's excited about the opportunity but admits he's got a big challenge ahead.

"I know the league, but it's still going to be a major learning curve," said Rusk, who officially took over the young team just 72 hours before its season opener.

Joining him behind the bench will be assistant Roger Hunt, who's back in the area and looking to build up his coaching resumé in Canada after a 15-year stint in the United Kingdom, where among other assignments he coached the national men's and junior teams.

Rounding out the coaching staff is Paul Micallef, originally hired to serve under McDougall, whom he'd played with for several years and worked with at the minor level. Micallef, whose son Chris is part of this year's roster, will pull double duty as an assistant coach and GM under Piett.

MILTON YOUTH BASKETBALL "MADD DAWGS" www.miltonmaddawgs.com

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1. Please visit our website for more details and to download the registration forms. (www.miltonmaddawgs.com)
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QUESTIONS: Call (905) 691-1675 (Brian Schroder) or email schroderbj@hotmail.com

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Bishop Reding H.S. (gym C)
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Bishop Reding H.S. (gym C)
Coach: Mr. Rob Lyons
(rlyonsbasketball@yahoo.ca)

Major Midget Boys U16 (born 1994)
Sept 21 & Sept 28 (8:30 - 10 pm)
Bishop Reding H.S.
Coach: Mr. Brian Schroder
(schroderbj@hotmail.com)

Midget Girls U15 (born 1995)
Sept 24 & Oct 1 (8-9:30)
Bishop Reding H.S.
Coach: Mr. Danney Hamilton
(danneyh@rogers.com)

Major Midget Girls U16 (born 1994)
Sept 23 (8:30 - 10) & Sept 24 (7-8:30)
Bishop Reding H.S.
Coach: Mr. Zack Alilovic
(z.alilovic@gmail.com)

Junior Girls U19 (born 91)
Sept 21 & Sept 28 (7-8:30)
Bishop Reding H.S.
Coach: Mr. Rob Samuels
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