

Milltown FC lands topnotch coach in Rafael Carbajal

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 their own hometown. In addition, MYSC coaches will gain amazing experience through the joint development programs that are involved with this affiliation."

True FC Inc. began pursuing a CSL franchise nine months ago and though it temporarily shelved the idea, it renewed its push for a team in the last four or five weeks. The CSA's endorsement of the league was a big factor in pursuing a team. "We wanted to be under the national umbrella," Rossi said. "Part of the program and the pathway to the national team program."

And while True FC Inc. is based in Mississauga, Rossi said they preferred to set up shop in a smaller community.

"We wanted to position ourselves in a community that was close to our home base. We wanted to be in a community we could reach out and touch, a community we could be a part of and connect with the population," he said. "When we met with the Milton Youth Soccer Club, the vibe was really super positive."

The team is off to a good start, hiring Rafael Carbajal as its coach. Carbajal was named the CSL's coach of the year in 2008 while with the North York Astros. He's also one of the few Canadians who holds A-level coaching certifications from both UEFA and the United States Soccer Federation.

Paolo Pacione, who has worked with the Ontario Soccer Association as well as the women's Under-17 national team, has been hired as the team's strength and conditioning coach.

"Rafael is one of the top coaches in his country," Rossi said. "He's worked professionally in Europe and he's committed to making a difference on the Canadian soccer scene. Paolo is a bit of a task master but the players like it because they know he's making them more successful on the pitch and Rafael's style of play demands physical preparation."

Now the task at hand is to fill the playing roster. Rossi admits that the team is at a disadvantage because it must start from scratch while other teams already have

established rosters. "Obviously the CSL is elite men's soccer and competition at the top level is going to be stiff, but we're not limiting anyone by age or experience. There might be someone out there who might not be in an organized league but has tremendous skill."

Each team in the league has a salary floor, but no salary cap — though Rossi said it is much like the National Lacrosse League, where players are either students or have full-time jobs away from the sport. "Players are not getting rich," he said, "but they play because they are so passionate about the game."

Milltown FC will also operate a reserve team that will play in the CSL reserve league and Rossi said that will be an important part of the team's development model.

"There are a lot of quality young players who need to be exposed to the big boys, the elite players. That's what motivates them, inspires them," he said. "They need to know what it takes to play at the top level."

And while the CSL may not be the top level — Rossi equates it to AA baseball — he believes it can be an important step for players in reaching their potential.

"If you have an 18-year-old who has the talent, you want it to be a

stepping stone," he said. "In soccer there are so many avenues. We want to be there to prepare them to compete at whatever level they are able to compete at, whether it's the MSL, Europe or Asia. There's a global market for soccer players. The opportunities are as wide as their commitment, skill and desire allows them."

Milltown FC will play most of its home games Friday nights with some Sunday afternoon games. The team will play a 24-game schedule from May until October.

Those wishing to try out are asked to register at www.milltown-fc.com.

SCTA playdowns await midget 'Canes

Look to rebound from shutout loss to Guelph

By Steve LeBlanc
 CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Gary Abraham couldn't find much positive about the way his midget Hurricanes closed out the regular season Saturday.

But if he needed something encouraging to cling to following a 4-0 humbling to the Guelph Jr. Storm at Milton Sports Centre, it's that his team has rebounded

from virtually all of their decisive losses this year with an immediate victory.

The Hurricanes coach can only hope that trend continues this weekend, when they travel to Oakville's Joshua Creek Arenas for the SCTA league playdowns.

"We didn't come ready to play, and giving up the first goal gave them (Storm) a lot of momentum.

We can't take any inferior opponent lightly," said Abraham, just moments after his third-place squad was blanked by a team that finished 27 points behind them in the standings.

Sporting nine Milton players this season — including injured (broken collarbone) defenceman George Kopas — the Hurricanes coughed up the puck a few times in the early stages of play and didn't put enough pressure on visiting netminder Taylor O'Keefe until the verdict had long been decided.

Also of some concern was an 0-for-5 powerplay whitewash, which continued a rather inconsistent season effort in that department.

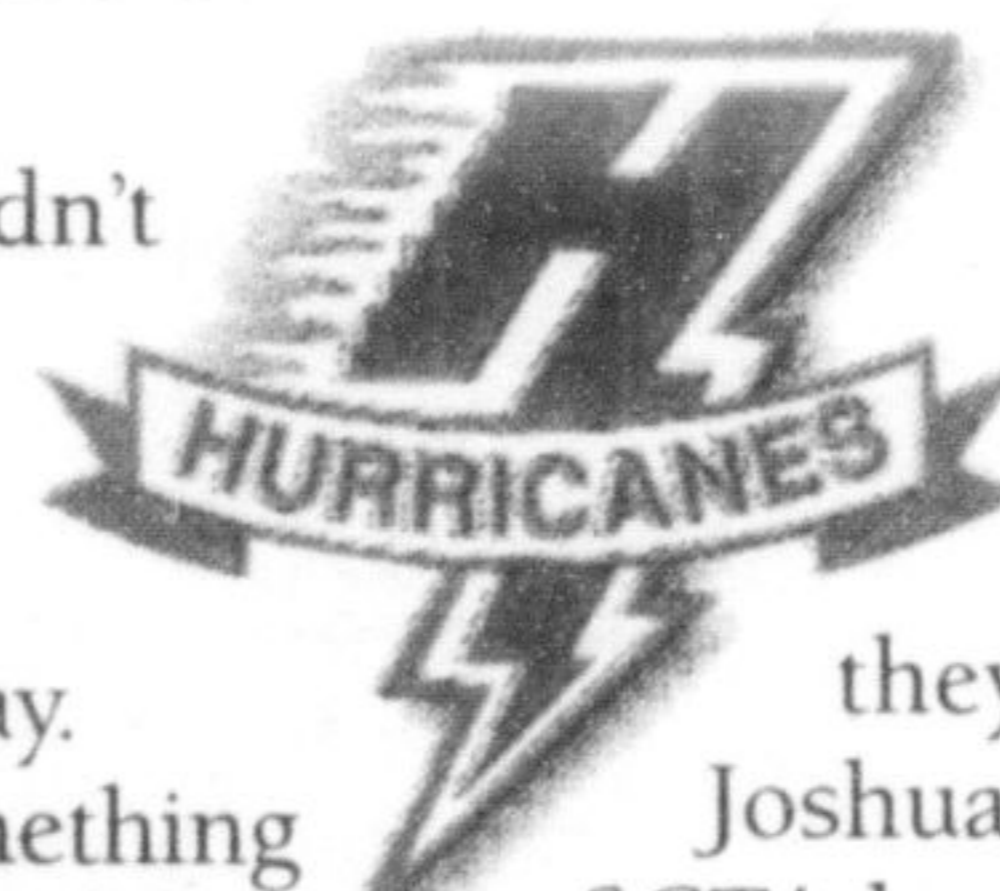
Said Abraham, "We've got to get more traffic in front and get pucks to the net. We don't need to make the perfect play. Sometimes it's the simple ones that are most effective."

Halton showed strongly on a couple of penalty kills and actually out-shot Guelph 26-23.

The defeat snapped a four-game win streak for the Hurricanes, who finished the season at 24-11-1.

They'll take on Burlington, Brampton, St. Catharines and Welland in SCTA round-robin play, which begins tomorrow afternoon.

The top two finishers from the 10-team tournament advance to next weekend's OMHA championships in Quinte.



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