

Sports

Wright leads SDSS athletes at area track meets



Wendy Wright of Stouffville District Secondary School finished second in the girls 1,500-metre race at Wednesday's track meet held at the Stouffville Community Track. A number of SDSS athletes put in strong showings at the meet.

Photo: SJOERD WITTEVEEN

By BRUCE STAPLEY
Correspondent

The athletes were keeping pace with the stiff breeze at the second annual Markham-Stouffville Midget-Open Track and Field Meet Wednesday at the Stouffville Community Track.

Wendy Wright, Stouffville District Secondary School's (SDSS) willowy running machine, was second in the midget girls 1,500-metre race, four seconds back of the winner. She picked up the bronze in the 400-metre event.

Stouffville's Jessica Weatherill was second in the javelin throw with a distance of 27.81 metres. Mike Schlotter hurled

the shot put an impressive 12.68 metres, just two centimetres short of the winning throw in the midget boys category.

SDSS athletes Luke Anderson and Chris Lamont were fourth and fifth respectively in the steeple chase.

The SDSS track and field team placed 11th overall out of the 18 participating schools.

The school's track and field athletes are to compete in the York Region Secondary Schools Association (YRSSA) outdoor championships at York University next Thursday.

Rowland Games results

At the 24th annual Rowland Games/Nike Neil McNeil Track and Field Meet at Etobi-

coke Stadium April 26-27, Wright was third in her heat in the 1,500-metre race, clocking a time of 5:58.49 in the frigid conditions.

SDSS's Dwayne Epp was ninth in his heat in the 1,500-metre run, while Chris Lamont was 12th in a strong field in the steeple chase. Chris Cherkas and Chris Weatherill also put in strong efforts at the meet, which included over 2,000 athletes from 105 schools.

The SDSS track and field athletes are to compete in the York Region Secondary Schools Association (YRSSA) outdoor track and field championships at York University Thursday.

Acton enjoying NHL playoffs

By BRUCE STAPLEY
Correspondent

While Toronto Maple Leaf fans in Stouffville and elsewhere are still reeling from the one-two punch of their team's demise and a no-show spring, everything's coming up roses for Keith Acton.

The 38-year-old former Stouffville Clipper is revelling in the success of the Philadelphia Flyers as the National Hockey League's Eastern Conference regular season champions chase after the Stanley Cup.

Acton, who is in the second season as Flyers' assistant coach, spoke to *The Tribune* for his Flyers' office Wednesday on the eve of his team's second round playoff series with the Florida Panthers.

"It's been in the 70's down here the past few days, the leaves are on the trees and the tulips are out," he said after being told of the cold, wet

spring back home.

But the weather is a minor distraction for Acton as he contemplates the excitement of the current playoffs. "Any time you get down to the final eight teams you know you're up against good hockey teams," he said of the Flyers' hook up with the Panthers.

The Flyers, who lost out to the eventual Stanley Cup champion New Jersey Devils in last year's conference finals, are favored to prevail in the set on the basis of their sparkling season record of 45 wins, 24 defeats and 13 ties.

Acton said he's enjoying watching the team push towards the ultimate goal. "It's fun, there's no doubt about it. We're hoping we can go all the way. They want it. But it's tough to win a championship."

Acton said his second year as one of two assistants to Flyers' head coach Terry Murray has allowed him to finally make a true transition

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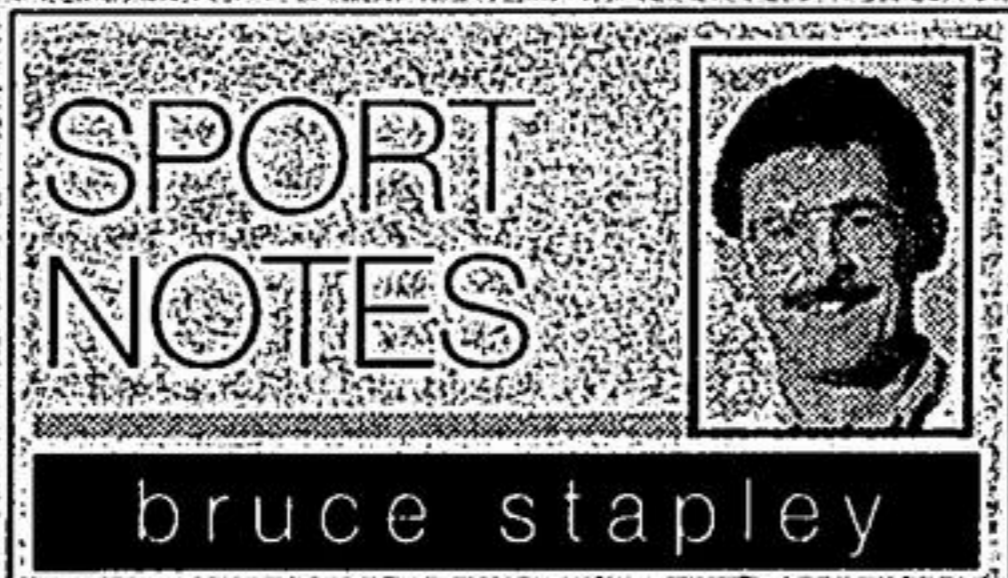
Town in for a treat when Canada hosts Japan in women's softball

If all goes according to Hoyle, and Bob Abbot, the Canadian Olympic women's softball team will be sharing the Memorial Park main diamond with their Japanese Olympic counterparts June 30.

The twin bill, which will also include the 1993 Eastern Canadian titlist Port Perry intermediate women's team, will see the Canadians playing each of the other two teams in the wake of the annual Buttermakers Strawberry Festival Tournament.

These are the perks a town gets when it has friends in high places. In this case, that friend is Siloam's Bob Abbot, whose involvement in the Stouffville softball scene goes back to when he was a coach with the now-defunct Stouffville Stingers intermediate women's team in the 1980's.

The retired chartered accountant who is chairman of national teams for Softball Canada, will serve as team



leader (a.k.a. manager) of the Canadian team that will contest the first ever women's Olympic softball event at the centennial Olympic Games in Atlanta this summer. Abbot has booked the Stouffville exhibition double header as part of a pre-Olympic training schedule which will hopefully see the highly talented Canadian women in peak form when they take to the field in steamy, hot Georgia July 21.

The Canucks are to face a major test when they compete in the Canada Cup in Vancouver in mid-June. That tourney could include Olympic teams from Japan, Australia and Taipei, as well as some big name squads from the Canadi-

an and American west coast areas. Then it's on to Ontario to the conclusion of the Canada Cup event, with games in Oshawa, Stouffville and Brampton before the women leave for a tourney in Decatur, Ill. the next week. The team will then take up residence in a private college in Montgomery, Alabama for a week or so of acclimatization to the kind of muggy weather they will encounter in Georgia during the Games.

Once the Games begin, Abbot has said his team will be gunning for a medal, despite the fact the competition will be as thick as the Georgia humidity is oppressive. "Every game will be like a medal game, there are no weak teams," he told me recently. But his team has proven it can keep up. At the 1994 qualifier for Olympics we beat China 1-0, and we lost the bronze medal games 1-0 to Australia.

The Canadian team was

among the five squads to qualify at that competition which was held in New Brunswick. The other three teams that will contest the Summer Games event were added after they prevailed in various high level tournaments around the world. Abbot said the host Americans are the team to beat. The Canadians have tangled with their U.S. counterparts on several occasions in recent years, but have always fallen just short.

"We were always close in the Pan American Games and at the world championships, but we never beat them. But who knows what might happen at the Olympics. All the pressure is on the Americans."

Abbot points to the fact that



BOB ABBOT

the women's softball team is one of only a few Canadian units to qualify for Olympic team events. He said the national baseball, basketball and volleyball teams all fell short. He also said the demand for tickets for the women's softball showdown is so great that organizers are considering adding extra seating at Golden Park Stadium in Columbus, Ga., which is about 80 miles from Atlanta. "Tickets are sold out. The interest in softball in the United States is big time because they are the reigning Pan Am Games and world champions."

Abbot said the key to winning will lie in his team's conditioning, as well as in their ability to adapt to the stifling heat. He's confident the Canadian women are equal to the task. "We think we're going to win a medal. They've worked too hard to be happy with anything less."

It looks like we're in for a rare treat June 30.