

Sports & Leisure

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KICKING UP A STORM: Stouffville District Secondary School's Katie Scorrar (left) boots the ball away from a Unionville High School player in a recent York Region Athletic Association girls' soccer contest at Unionville High School. Unionville High School won the game 7-0.

Photo by SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Local youth soccer kicks up a storm this campaign

BRUCE STAPLEY
Correspondent

The Whitchurch-Stouffville Soccer Club (WSSC) is bulging at the seams as young children and families take to the game in ever increasing numbers.

With a registration of 650 players, up a full 100 players from last season, the club is trying to cope with the added pressures brought on by the sudden expansion.

"It's huge, it's almost scary," said club registrar Agnes Locksley. "The biggest increase is in the youth division."

Fifty teams in all will take to the fields when the season gets under way May 26. Due to the boom in the younger age groups, the club's youth division is being split into two sections. A new under six division will include nine teams, while the seven and under category will have 14 squads. These age groups combined to field only 16 teams last season. There are also nine and under, 11 and under, 13 and under, and 15 and under divisions.

WSSC president Joe Caldeira said the club's vice president in charge of mini-soccer, Andrew Paterson, is looking for help due to the dramatic rise in youth level registration. Caldeira said Ken Goodbrand, the club's VP in charge of girls soccer, is also being pushed to the limit this year.

"Ken's done such a good job. Women's soccer is booming. It's going to overtake the guys if this

keeps up. There's been a big drive in women's soccer in York Region. The women are playing some good soccer now."

With the increase in teams, the club will rely heavily on the Novopharm fields. Thirteen mini-fields will be used at the west end site for the under 10 teams, with pitches to be used for older teams as well. The Rec Centre fields will be used for the more senior players. "Without Novopharm I don't know what we'd do," acknowledged Caldeira. "In fact, several businesses have been most cooperative in different ways."

Caldeira said the club is looking for more qualified instructors to serve as coaches. "A few of our coaches have taken clinics, and more have shown interest. The kids need qualified coaches." He said the club is presently looking for a new head coach to replace Mike Preston, who has moved to Pickering. A replacement referee in chief is also required to fill the spot left vacant when Ravi Joneja stepped down due to other commitments.

The club will likely not field any adult teams this season, said Caldeira. No rep teams have been formed yet, although Caldeira said that could still happen. Teams will all play either house league at the in-house level, or recreational soccer in the York Region league. Mark Ockwell is the club's VP in charge of recreational soccer.

All teams will gather May 21 for an initial meet the coach day.

Hospice golf tournament set for June 4

The Hospice Markham-Stouffville's second Annual Hospice Golf Tournament is slated for June 4.

The four-person scramble is to be held at the Silver Lakes Golf and Country Club near Bradford. The event includes two hole in one contests, with golfers shooting for a Lexus

from Don Valley North Toyota and a Sebring provided by Markham Dodge Chrysler. There will also be a putting contest, skins game and a 'Closest to the Volunteer' contest.

Entry fee is \$150 per person, which includes dinner at Seton Hall. Entry forms are available at the hospice office, or call 905-472-5014.

Local courses become part of golf conglomerate



Sports
Notes

Bruce Stapley

And then there were 10. With the acquisition of three more golf courses over the past winter, along with a sparkling 36-hole facility currently being developed near Oakville, the ClubLink Corporation has reached the decade mark in terms of golf properties included in its impressive stable.

Among the ClubLink collection are Whitchurch-Stouffville's Emerald Hills, Clarendon's Cherry Downs and King Valley in Aurora. The trio was among the four originals held by the well-heeled corporation.

The most recent acquisitions include the Chestnut Hill club over at Leslie and Bloomington Road, which has seen its name changed to the DiamondBack Golf Club.

That facility will host the CPGA's Infiniti Championship for the second straight year this July.

ClubLink president Bruce Simmonds said the best is yet to come.

"We already are the largest golf club operator in Canada, and we want to continue to be that," Simmonds told me from his car phone recently.

EXPANSION POTENTIAL

"There's lots of expansion potential here in Ontario. Over the next five years we plan to have a total of around 25 courses in Ontario."

But Simmonds and his associates aren't content to restrict their operations to Canada.

ClubLink, which includes as its shareholders five of the top 10 Canadian mutual fund companies, not to mention some high profile pension funds, has invested in 23 golf courses in the United States as it establishes a stateside bulkhead.

Simmonds cited interest in golf in Canada is rising steadily.

He quoted a survey stating that 24 per cent of the people in this country play golf, the highest percentage of any country in the world.

And that figure is up six per cent from a similar survey conducted just six years ago.

Armed with a slew of statistics

relevant to his company's vital interests, he cites another finding that will surprise some people.

The average rounds per year played by golfers in temperate British Columbia is nine.

Here in frigid Ontario, that number climbs all the way up to 16.

Simmonds suggests it's simply a matter of what you can't have, you want.

"There's not the sense of urgency in B.C.," Simmonds reasons.

"Here in Ontario, when the weather finally turns nice people want to get out there as much as they can."

The ClubLink philosophy is to put together the biggest collection of golf properties possible, then pool them in a common package for members to play.

Members lay out an initial amount ranging from \$15,000 to \$40,000, then pay yearly dues.

Once on board, they can play any of the ClubLink courses.

"It works extremely well," said Simmonds. "People love the variety."

ROYALS HAVE PRIDE

Former Stouffville Merchant Junior centre fielder and current town resident Bill Pride has landed a spot on the roster of the Scarborough Royals of the International Softball Congress men's travel league.

Also signing on with the Royals is Oshawa's Hubie Basilio, who was a pitcher with the 1992 Merchants squad that came within a game of winning a third straight Ontario Junior fastball championship.

PEEWEEES CONSOLED IN TOURNAMENT

The Stouffville Storm peewee select hockey team wound up their season recently with a consolation championship at a tournament in Uxbridge, a first round elimination at the hands of Pickering in North York League playoff action, and a berth in the finals at a tournament in Lindsay.

The team expressed gratitude to their sponsors for putting them on ice this season: Rammgraph Inc., Hulshof Masonry and Betz Pools.

The winners of the Storm's 50/50 draw were: Timber Loughlin (\$500 first prize), John Davis (second prize, hand made afghan), Doug Allman (third prize, pot pourri basket and clock).