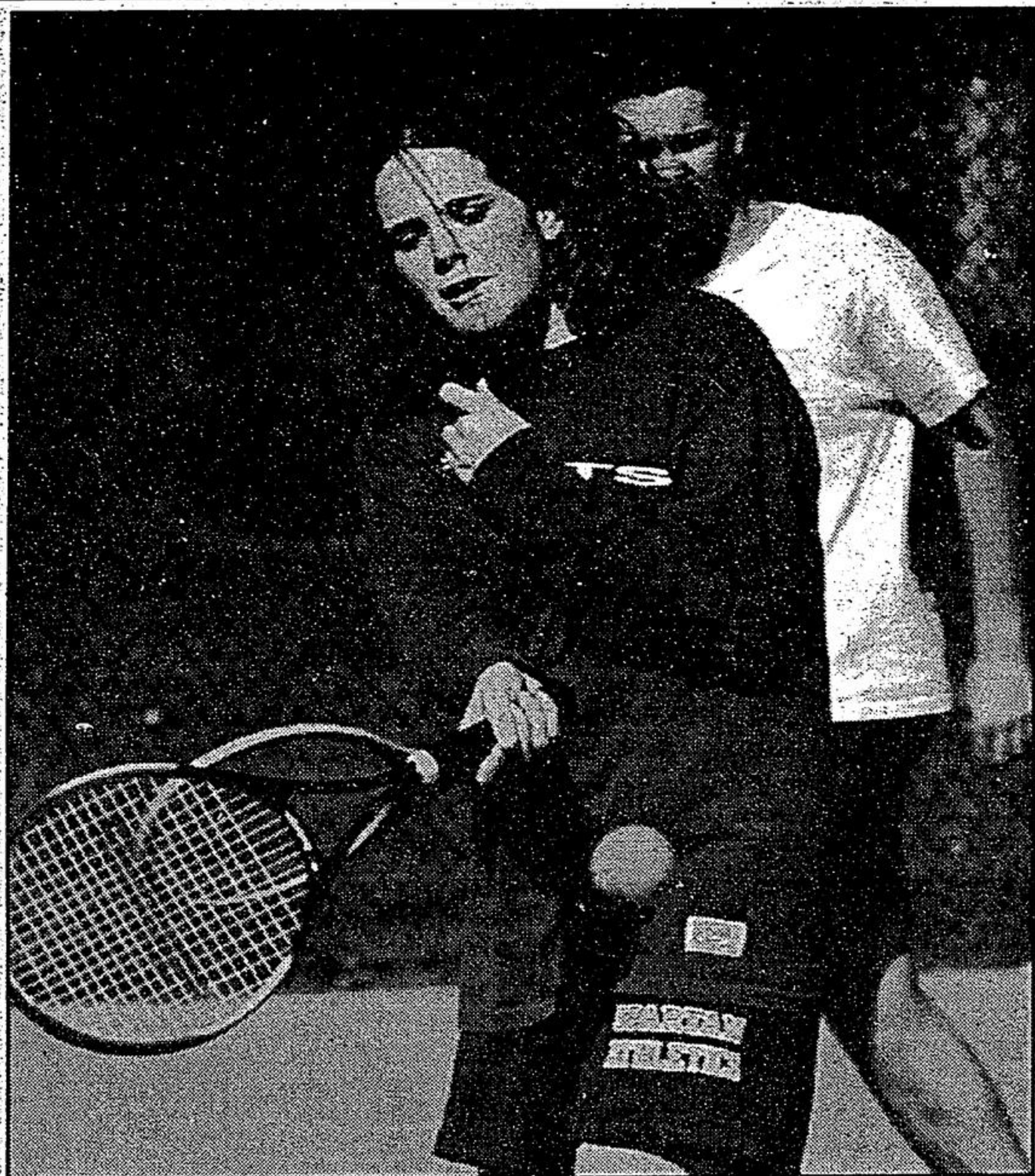


Sports & Leisure

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RETURNING A FAVOUR: Kari Sandiford (foreground), returns this shot to her opponent as her doubles partner, Jamie McColl, looks on during this physical education class at Stouffville District Secondary School on Tuesday.

Photo by SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Laskoski has the Spirit to heal players' aches

A cramped room with an attic-like slanted ceiling cutting into what small space is available isn't exactly the workplace Drew Laskoski is accustomed to.



Sports Notes

Bruce Stapley

But that's where the Spirit of Stouffville's latest acquisition plies his trade as players suffering from a variety of aches and pains come to the professional athletic therapist for relief.

During the Monday night practice preceding the Spirit's first game of the season, the 36-year-old Sharon resident directs Spirit left winger Jasen Hopiavuori to lie down on the gurney in the little room near the team's Rec Centre dressing room.

He proceeds to administer a series of treatments to the big teen, who was shaken up in a minor car accident a few days before.

"Does that feel better?" he says after working on the teen's neck for 10 or so minutes. "A little yeah," replies Hopiavuori. "I could do better if I had another 20 minutes or so to work on it," said Laskoski. "But go out and have a skate and see how it feels."

Laskoski, who in his real life runs a sports medicine clinic in Newmarket, was the athletic therapist for that town's Provincial league squad, the 87's Hurricane, for almost 10 years.

SPIRIT WAS WILLING AND ABLE TO GET LASKOSKI

The Spirit were more than willing to take him on, and he feels he definitely has something to offer the team.

"I've been working with a top notch organization for some time," he said. "I hope to bring in some of those ideas to this team."

Laskoski brings along with him a bachelor of science in kinesiology earned at the University of Waterloo, and a degree in sports injury management picked up at Sheridan College.

His training puts him on the same level as therapists with the Canadian Olympic Team. He opened his first clinic in Newmarket's Upper Canada Mall in 1990, shifting it several years later to his present Davis Dr. location.

Laskoski, who is head of the research committee for the Ontario Athletic Therapy Association, considers his a cutting edge profession.

Methods of treating sports injuries are changing as therapists offer alternatives to the old ways.

"Take a charley horse for example," Laskoski offers. "In the past they would put

heat on it and stretch it. Now we understand the inflammatory process better, so we'll use ice and micro-current. Science is starting to catch up. There's more manual therapy, for instance."

With sports coming to play such a large part in the lives of people of all ages, athletic therapists and their know how are in demand, suggests Laskoski.

"The public is better informed today so their demands are greater. "It's a growth industry."

He said athletic therapists are able to offer therapy specific to the needs of each sport.

"There are exercises relating to stick handling for hockey players, things like that."

The profession has grown to the point where the bigger high schools in the United States now have athletic therapists on staff to look after the needs of school athletes.

"Now it's trickling down to Junior A hockey teams here," said Laskoski.

What are the trends in athletic injuries today?

"Knee and shoulder injuries are common," Laskoski offers. "There are less ankle injuries in hockey because skates are being made better."

As for his usefulness with the Spirit, he feels he won't be sitting around twiddling his thumbs.

"The style of hockey is changing, there's more emphasis on taking the body. That means more collisions."

ANGIE'S EATERY CONTINUES TO SUPPORT GIRLS' HOCKEY

Luba and Spiro Panos, the mother-son team which operates Angie's Eatery in Stouffville's west end, are celebrating their 10th year as a major sponsor of girls hockey in Stouffville.

The restaurant is sponsoring the Whitchurch-Stouffville Girls Hockey Association bantam B rep team this season.

The Panos also sponsor softball and soccer teams, with an annual budget of around \$3,000 for team sponsorships.

The restaurant invites local boys and girls hockey teams to come into the restaurant to eat for half price before or after their games.

Luba, who says it's important to put something back into a town when you're making your living there, never played sports as a kid, although she says she would have if the opportunity had presented itself. "I play golf sometimes," she said.

Special guests set to attend anniversary

BRUCE STAPLEY
Correspondent

It's eight days and counting as the Whitchurch-Stouffville Minor Hockey Association (WSMHA) prepares to celebrate its 50th anniversary with a gala night at the Rec Centre on Oct. 3 at 7 p.m.



The night, which will include a double-header featuring the minor novice and midget Clippers, is to be a celebration of the WSMHA's past, present and future.

Jason Reesor, a member of the Canadian university championship Guelph hockey team last year, will be on hand, as will be former stars Doug Feasby, Dan Larmer and Bill and Bob Hassard.

Betty and Gerry Acton will be there representing their son Keith, who is unable to attend due to his responsibilities as assistant coach of the Philadel-

phia Flyers.

Representatives from several long time sponsors including Schell Lumber, Edwards Murphy Painting and Decorating, and the Markham-Stouffville Credit Union will also be there.

"There'll be WSMHA past presidents and coaches, and people who have done so much for youth in Stouffville like Cliff Dunkeld and Judy Scala," said WSMHA first vice-president Andy Cartwright.

"We'll also have the future of the WSMHA, the youngest player registered this year."

Members of the Spirit of Stouffville, including players from Stouffville, will be on hand to sign autographs after the opening ceremonies, said Cartwright.

Cartwright said organizers are still looking for pictures and other items from the past 50 years of minor hockey in Stouffville.

Commemorative mementoes will be handed out to current WSMHA players wearing team jerseys.

Fans can get into the Spirit with players on Oct. 4

Local fans of the Spirit of Stouffville will get the chance to share the ice with their heroes on Oct. 4.

The Provincial Junior A Hockey League

team is holding a Skate With The Spirit session, with residents invited to lace up their skates and take to the Rec Centre's pad B ice surface for a leisurely skate with

members of the local squad.

As well as their cameras and autograph books, fans are being asked to bring along a non-perishable food item for the

Whitchurch-Stouffville Foodbank.

The free skate is to run from 5:30 till 7:30 p.m., and fans of all ages are welcome.