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HIGH SCHOOLS: Teachers and students are happy as labour problems are in the past

Fall sports are up and running

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA
Staff Writer

The teachers are happy and so too are the students. After a year in which no sports were conducted last fall due to the labour dispute between teachers and the provincial government, extracurricular recreational activities at York Region high schools are back.

Since the start of the new academic year, junior and senior football teams from Markham District High School and Brother Andre Catholic High School have been diligently working out on the gridiron after regular school hours.

As well, school gymnasiums have been occupied before and after school with auditions for girls' basketball and boys'

volleyball teams.

"It's nice to get back into (running fall sports)," said Brother Andre senior football coach Terry Lyons. "I feel a lot better. I feel I'm doing what I'm supposed to be doing. The more time you can spend with (the students) the better off you are in the long run."

The enthusiasm stemming from the teachers and students can be witnessed by the number of school teams being fielded. Lyons pointed out his school will have representation in football, girls' basketball, boys' volleyball, boys' soccer, cross-country, boys' and girls' tennis and golf.

With the football program alone, Lyons noted close to 73 players came out for the junior trials while another 45 attended the first day of senior auditions.

The one year off last year will hurt in terms of development," he acknowledged. "But the kids are definitely excited to be back."

Mike Feasby, Markham District High School senior football coach, detects a high degree of enthusiasm among teachers and students with the revival of a fall sports program.

There's definitely a high degree of enthusiasm to get things going again. This year there's definitely more teams going on than what we've had in the past."

Among the sports being offered at Markham District High this fall include football, girls' basketball, golf, tennis, field hockey, cross-country, boys' soccer and volleyball.

Feasby feels the increase in enthusiasm can be attributed to a couple of factors including the introduction of new staff members who are interested in participating and the absence of sports last fall, which the students sorely missed.

Keith Hotrum, cross-country coach at Markham District High School, cited a group of 30 students came out for his team. And at recent declaration meetings, he revealed some 32 YRAA schools will field cross-country teams.

At Stouffville District Secondary School, physical education head Jamie Hewitt said "things are back to normal."

The first-year physical education head noted his school will field three boys' volleyball teams, a midget and junior girls' basketball team, cross-country, girls' field hockey and a junior and senior boys' and girls' golf team.

"We had a coach's meeting last week at our school and there were teachers willing to coach. So sports are going."

Coaching the junior girls' basketball team this year, Hewitt had 20 players turn out for auditions and noted anywhere from 20 to 25 came out for the midget girls' cage team.

The re-introduction of fall activities has renewed the spirits of students.

"I'm so glad that there are fall sports," said Jodi Gram, a Grade 11 student at Markham District High School.

A member of the senior girls' basketball team, Gram said the presence of fall sports has brought back some unity among teachers and students.

There's not as much tension between the students and teachers now that it's (fall sports) back, there's more camaraderie. I couldn't be happier.

"It (sports) gives you a chance to do other things than just study. It breaks up the year a bit."

Hewitt said the YRAA will hold a general meeting on Tuesday and schedules for the various fall activities are expected to be issued then.

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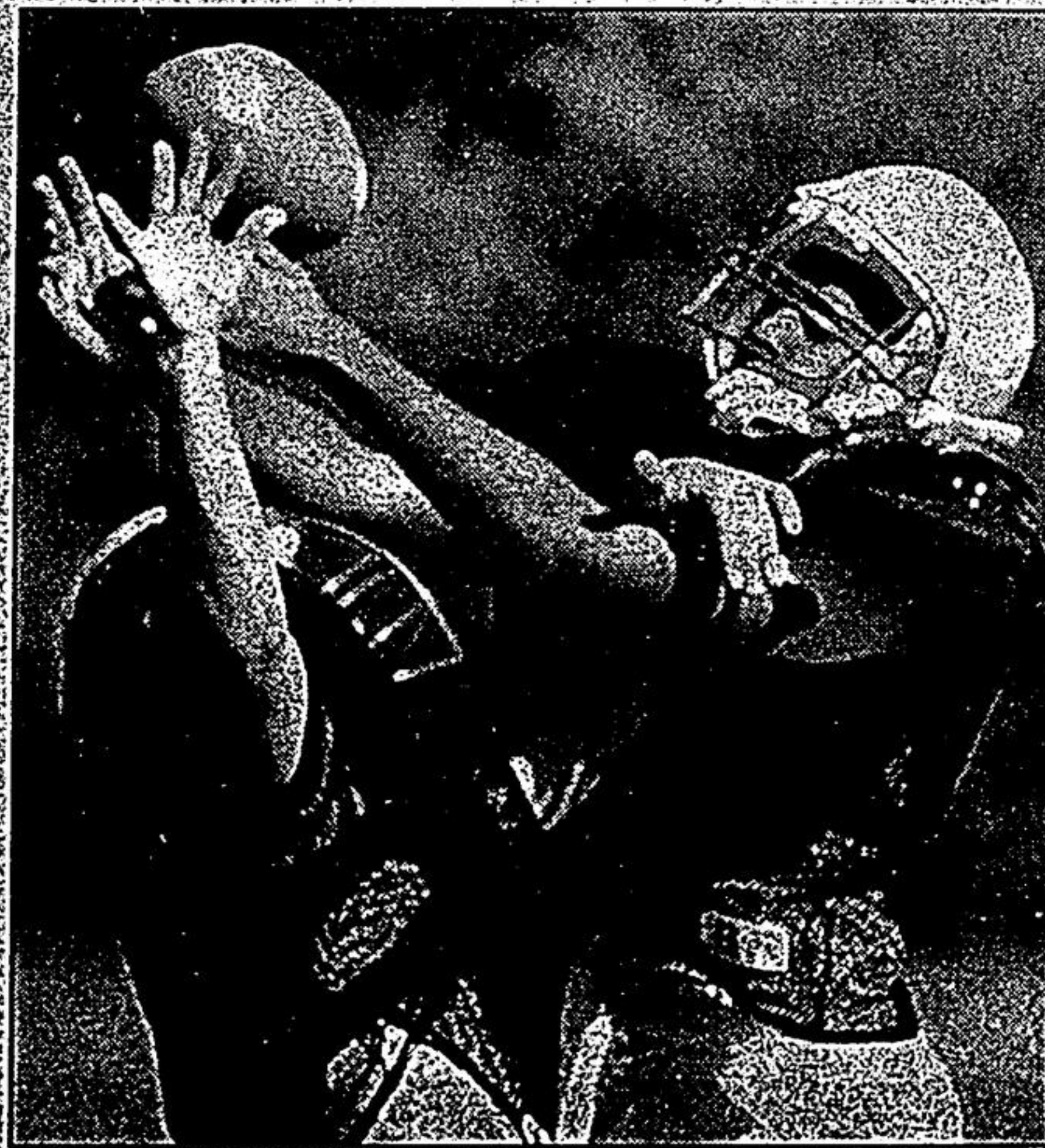
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PROGRAMS SANCTIONED BY C.E.S.A.



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEN

High School football is back after a one-year absence. In preparing for a new season, Brother Andre Catholic High School players Rob Bottaro (left) and Shiva Seegobin go for this tossed ball during Tuesday's practice.