

Hakonson sells interest in Spirit junior A hockey club

BY BRUCE STAPLEY
Correspondent

Ed Hakonson has sold his interest in the Spirit of Stouffville Junior A hockey club.

The Stouffville businessman's interest in the team has been purchased by Goodwood resident Zeev Werek and Richmond Hill's Larry Goldberg, who bought into the franchise last season.

Hakonson, who took over ownership of the club just months after its tentative beginning in the fall of 1995, said he has shifted his interest to stock car racing.

Through his Stouffville-based Choko Motorsports, he has entered into an ownership/sponsorship arrangement that will see him involved with a CASCAR racing team this season.

"It's something we always wanted to do," said Hakonson, who has sponsored CASCAR entries in recent years.

Choko manufactures and distributes apparel for the car racing industry.

"We're pretty happy," said Werek upon taking over the Spirit with Goldberg.

He said the deal with Hakonson was amicable. "We had originally wanted to buy the team (last fall) but Ed wanted to stay on. Ed has left the door open for anything we might need."

Werek said he and Goldberg plan to pick up where the Spirit left off this past season, winning their first two playoff series in franchise history while drawing sell out crowds.

"With the great response we got in this year's playoffs, we're looking to make the team even more community oriented."

He said Spirit players would be available to run power skating and skills sessions for Stouffville minor hockey teams during the season.

Werek said Spirit head coach Brian Perrin has agreed to return for the 2000-2001 season. Assistant coach Ken Burrows will also be back, with added responsibilities that will see the Stouffville resident heading up the club's hockey operations. Craig Donovan, the team's other assistant coach, is to take a sabbatical year. His replacement is to be named later.

Bob McKinnon and Vic Wilson have rejoined



ED HAKONSON

Elected to shift interest to stock car racing

the club and will be involved in player development.

Werek said that while Pat Madigan had stepped down as vice-president in charge of hockey operations, he hoped Madigan would rejoin the club at some point in the future.

"The door is wide open."

Werek said the Spirit is looking to make some key additions involving several quality veterans from other provincial league teams on the ice next season.

"We have some huge acquisitions pending, three real big names."

He said players are being drawn to the Spirit, and to Stouffville.

"Kids are attracted here because of the town. They heard the rink was packed for the playoffs and they like that."

Grant Buckley, the Goodwood defenceman who played for the Spirit after being drafted by the Mississauga Ice Dogs of the Ontario Hockey League last spring, will play for the Ice Dogs next season. Several other Spirit players are eligible for this year's draft.

"I think we're going to ride on our success of last year," said Werek.

He said the 2000-2001 Spirit would add maturity to last season's rookie-rich squad.

"We're going to pick up some older kids."

Hakonson sees nothing but future success for the Spirit.

"The Spirit are going to do very well. They're positioned right."

He didn't rule out a return to hockey involvement in the future.

"I wouldn't mind getting into the O (OHL) some day," he said.

Spiritually speaking, players looking to take part in the Spirit Rookie Camp May 27 to 28 should contact Werek at (905) 479-3131.

People interested in acting as billets for Spirit players for the 2000-2001 season should contact Carol Averill at 640-8921.

Tennis club opens today

The Unionville Tennis Club opens its courts for another season today and welcomes any new members.

Known as one of the largest community clubs in Canada, the Unionville Tennis Club has nine courts including three clay courts at its Carleton Park location. The club

also has two professionals on staff. Last year, the club was awarded the Ontario Tennis Association Junior Achievement Award. The club is also designated as a youth training centre. Those wishing further information can call (905) 470-7059.

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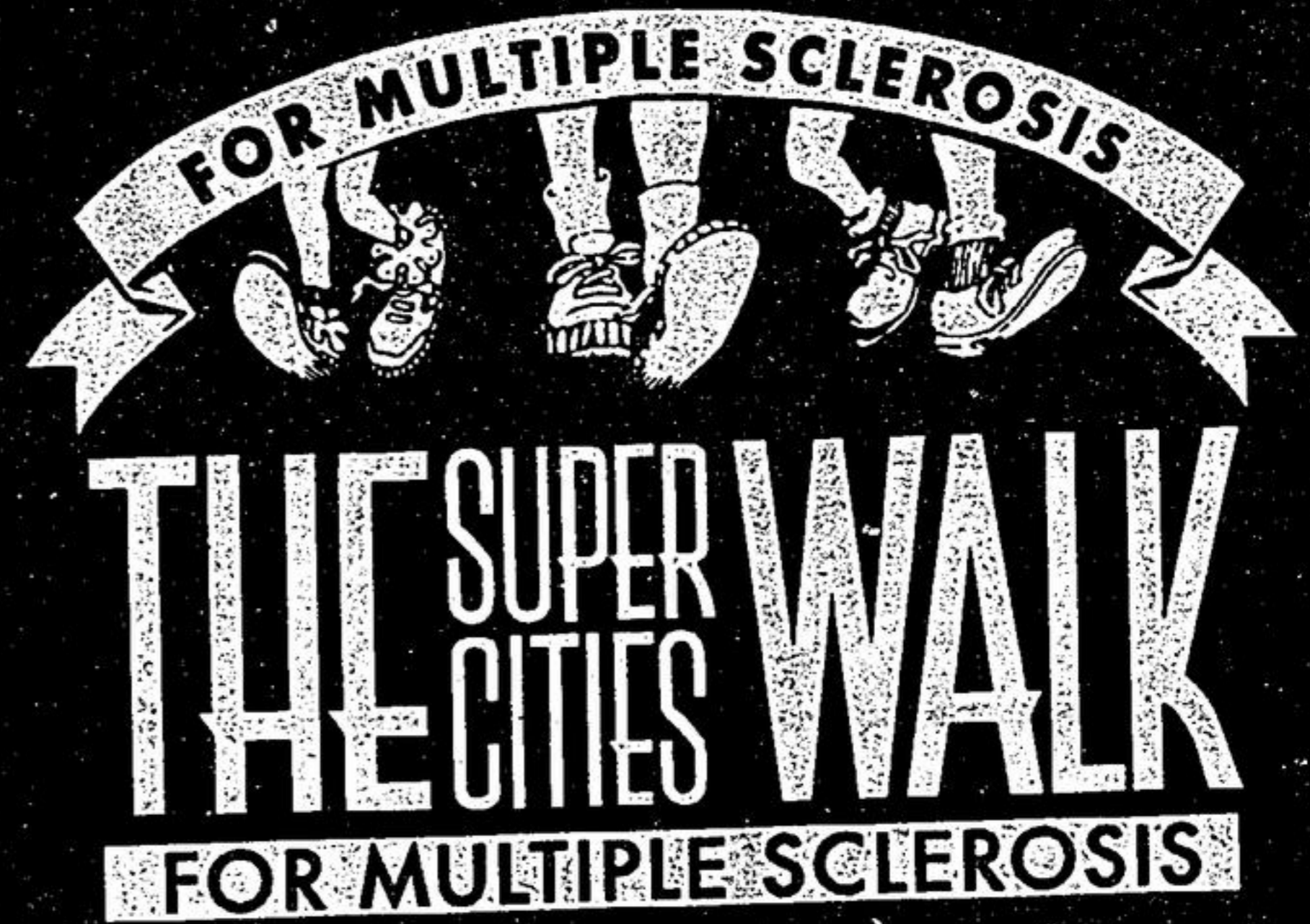
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Hill dives off to nationals

SPORTS DIGEST

Courtney Hill of the Markham Diving Club gained the right to compete at the upcoming national championships after placing third in the girls 14 and 15 one-metre and three-metre boards at the recent national qualifier in Thunder Bay.

Among other Markham club members that competed, Brittany McGann placed fifth in the girls 11 and under one-metre board and was fourth on the three-metre board.

The nationals will be held July 10 to 16 in Thunder Bay.

Cougars claw tournament title

The Markham Cougars girls softball team capitalized on two Maryhill miscues in the third inning to score four unearned runs en route to a 4-2 win in the title game of a preseason tournament hosted by Maryhill last weekend.

Joey Kyriazis went the distance on the rubber for the Cougars to earn the win and the game's

Most Valuable Player honours.

In reaching the final, the Cougars received a no-hit pitching effort from Rhea Jankowski to post a 17-0 win over Waterloo in their first game.

Jaclyn Dinetz then took to the rubber for the Cougars in its second game against the London Lightning and directed Markham to an 8-0 win.

Backed by Kyriazis' one hitter, the Cougars captured their final pool game over Maryhill 6-0 to advance to the championship final.

Other strong performances by the Cougars came from Christine Campoli, who scored six runs in the tournament, and Meghan Sullivan with five runs.



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