

# Hill, Pedersen swim off with Silver Dolphin Awards

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA  
Sports Editor

When Lena Pedersen and Courtney Hill went to a Town of Markham council meeting Tuesday they received a pleasant surprise.

Asked to attend the meeting as potential nominees for the Town of Markham's Silver Dolphin Awards presentation, the pair found out they were named this year's recipients.

Awarded on an annual basis since 1987, the Silver Dolphin Award represents the Town of Markham's top aquatic performers.

This year marked the first time that two Silver Dolphin trophies were issued.

A member of the Markham Diving Club, the 14-year-old Hill was the inaugural recipient of the Silver Dolphin national and international aquatic achievement award.

Pedersen, 27, was the Silver Dolphin local and provincial aquatic achievement award winner for her work in coaching the Markham Synchro Club.

A Grade 9 student at Unionville High School, Hill was the first Markham Diving Club member to win the award.

This past season, Hill won the provincial age group B title in the 15 and under group.

She also competed at the Canadian Age Group nationals where she finished 14th on the three-metre board and 16th on the one-metre board.

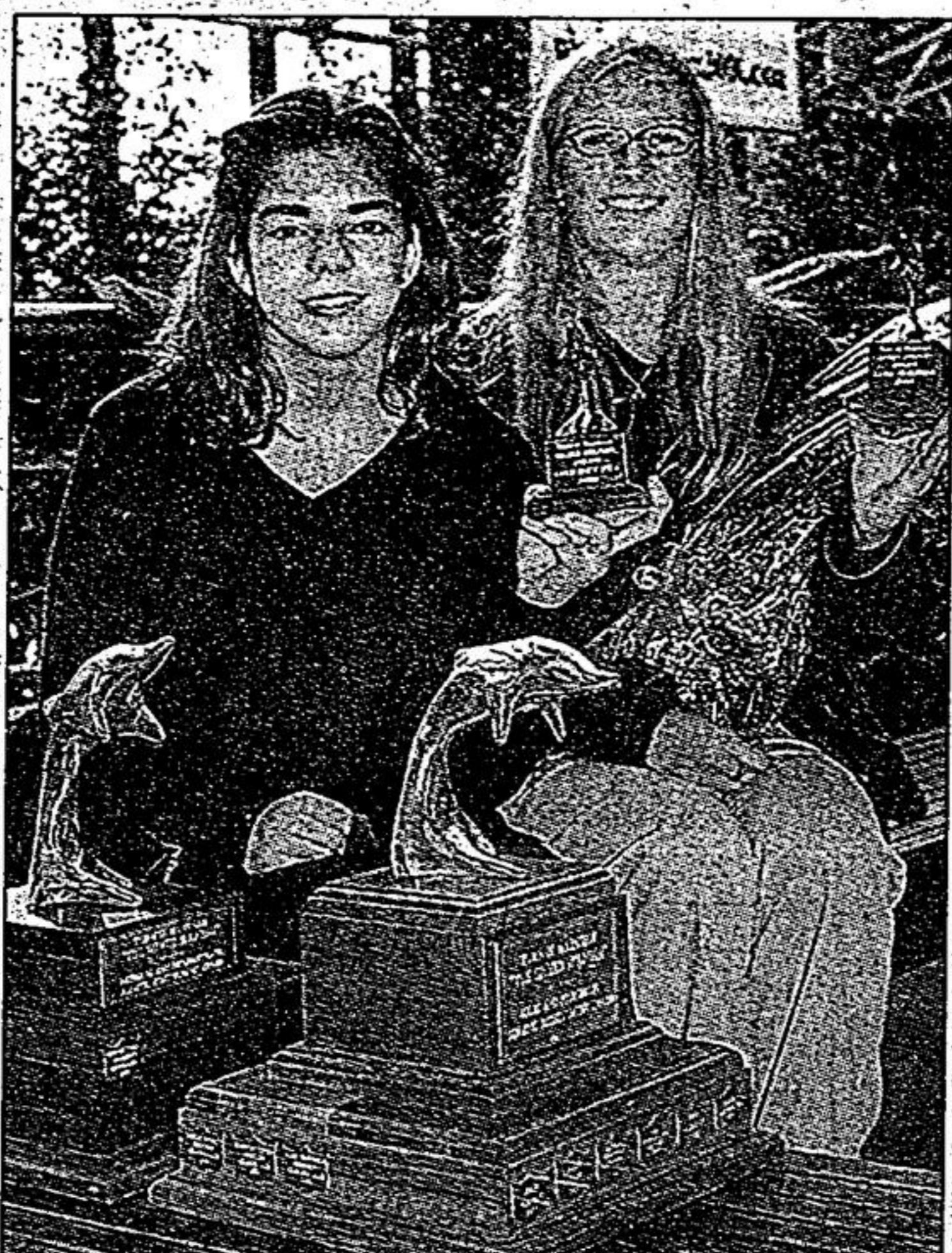
Just recently, she was named to the provincial diving team's 14 and 15-year-old squad.

"It's quite exciting to be the first person from the Markham Diving Club to get this award," said Hill. "My parents told me I had to attend the meeting because I was a nominee. I wasn't told anything (about winning the award) until today."

Taking up the sport when she was 10 years of age, and currently doing some coaching with the club's beginners group, Hill intends to continue her pursuit in the sport with the hope of placing in next year's nationals in the 15 and under division.

Pedersen is no stranger to this award as she was part of the Markham Synchro Club team that won it in 1993.

"I was just told to be here for a meeting of the nominees. It's really a nice gesture just to be nominated," said Pedersen, who gained notoriety after winning a gold medal in duet synchro with Laurie Mitchell in the World Masters Aquatic



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Courtney Hill (left), and Lena Pedersen were recipients of this year's Town of Markham Silver Dolphin Award. The award is presented annually to the top aquatic performers in Markham.

Championships in 1998 in Morocco.

Currently a coach with the Synchro Optima Club in North York and remaining a consultant for the Markham club, Pedersen's nomination came in part after directing the Markham club to its 10th Provincial Aggregate Synchro Award this season in the last 11 years.

Pedersen feels her success could be attributed to the philosophy which she developed through her years of coaching with the Markham club, which began when she was 16 years of age.

"The most important thing is to lead by example and keep (the sport) fun and in perspective and to keep (the performers) interested in the sport.

"Synchro also teaches life skills too. We're (the coaching staff) is responsible for giving them life skills and education."

# First-place Spirit enjoyed perfect October at home

BY BRUCE STAPLEY  
Correspondent

The Rec Complex proved user-friendly for the Spirit in October.

The Spirit capped a perfect October on home ice Thursday night as they downed the



Parry Sound Shamrocks 5-3 to give them five wins in five Rec Complex appearances on the month. The win gave the Spirit 23 points, good for a share of first place in the Provincial Junior A Hockey League's North Conference with the Newmarket Hurricanes.

The score flattered the Shamrocks as the Spirit held a commanding 45-24 edge in shots on goal and threatened to run the visitors out of the building after taking a 4-1 lead midway through the second period. But a combination of solid goal keeping by Parry Sound's A.J. Schneidmiller and the Spirit's inability to finish off their scoring chances gave the Shamrocks a life. The visitors took advantage by scoring two goals in just over two minutes half way through the third period to make it close. The Spirit finally clinched it on an empty net goal by Anthony Minicucci with 28 seconds to play.

"We allowed them to get back in the game," admitted Minicucci, who had two goals on the night.

"We should have capitalized more," agreed Andrew Francone, who netted his team leading 15th goal for the Spirit.

Spirit head coach Brian Perrin suggested there were two ways to interpret the fact that his team couldn't deliver the knock out punch. "We didn't put it all together. We weren't finishing off our plays," said Perrin. "But if we weren't producing the scoring chances I'd be worried."

The Shamrocks took an early 1-0 lead but the Spirit got goals from Minicucci on a power play, Francone, and rookie Joe Pagnani on a short handed effort to carry a 3-1 lead into the second. Justin Graham made it 4-1 in the second period.

Thomas Lee was solid when called upon in the Spirit net. He said it can be difficult to maintain an edge when opposition chances are at a minimum.

"You've got to stay concentrated," he said. He said the Spirit set the tone for the game early. "We had a lot of intensity in the first period. We made some good hits."

Francone, Minicucci and Eric Boonstra were named the Brimell Toyota Spirit Three Stars of the Game.

The Spirit were to travel to Aurora last night (Friday) to play the Tigers. The Stouffville squad is in Newmarket on Thursday, returning to the Rec Complex Nov. 4 to face the Huntsville Wildcats on minor hockey night.

## Pony Club members ride tall in the saddle

A six-rider team representing the Whitchurch-Stouffville Pony Club took top honours in the Musical Ride Challenge Cup held Sunday at the York Equestrian Centre.

Wowing a large crowd as they wove in and out through precision patterns to the music of Mambo Number 5, the team of Heather Muldoon riding Woody, Julia Luxemburge on Grover, Dianne Leadbetter on Kyna, Rohan Sajani on Junior, John Dacey on Duchesse and Laura Valenta on Callie, won the inaugural Freestyle Challenge.

# Kraemer hopes to be back to coach Markham men

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA  
Sports Editor

While Jens Kraemer was disappointed the Markham Soccer Club did not win Ontario Soccer League title this season, he said his coaching debut with the team was an enjoyable experience.



Inheriting a club that sported more losses than victories last season, the Markham team did a dramatic about face under Kraemer's direction in recording their best record in the six years since they've been in the OSL with a respectable 13-4-5 mark and a third-place finish.

To prove that their performance in the OSL was no fluke, the Markham men had its best showing ever in Ontario Cup play by advancing to the semi-finals before bowing out to league

archival Woodbridge Azzurri.

Ironically, this loss was also the most disappointing part of the season as Markham had defeated Azzurri twice during the regular season.

"I didn't know how we would fare because I hadn't been in the OSL before," said Kraemer in reflecting on the season just finished. "When I came to the club we had six or eight guys from last year's team. But I'm pretty happy with where we are now."

"It was a good change, going from the bottom to the top."

Coming so close to winning the league title, Kraemer is optimistic the club can take things one step further next season. That is, providing they can find a couple of pieces to complete the puzzle.

Foremost is the acquisition of a take-charge type of goalkeeper.

"I don't think we have a guy who exudes confidence on the whole team. I think our goal-keeping was average," he cited.

As well, Kraemer feels the loss of striker Neill Mair, who suffered a broken arm in a game against Magic A.C. in late August, left a gaping hole in its offence. Should Mair make a full recovery, the need to find a striker would not be as pressing, he noted.

Two areas Kraemer will not touch are the defence and midfielders, which he cited as being the club's forte.

"I wouldn't trade them (defence and midfielders) for the world," he said.

Kraemer has not had a chance to sit down with Markham manager Wyn Hughes to discuss his coaching future. But based on what transpired this season, he would like to return.

"There's a strong possibility that it (returning next year) will happen," he said.

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