Weiss leads parade of top-achieving Markham, Whitchurch-Stouffville athletes

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA
Sports Editor

Eighteen-year-old Unionville resident Stephen Weisstook a giant step towards attaining a childhood dream in July when he was the first-round pick and fourth pick overall by the Florida Panthers in the National Hockey League amateur draft.

A center with the Plymouth Whalers of the Ontario Hockey League, Weiss is in his third season with the club and led it in scoring last season with 40 goals and 47 assists.

Weiss also gained a berth on the Canadian junior national team that's competing in the 2001-2002 world championships in the Czech Republic.

STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Stephen Weiss is on Canada's junior national hockey team.

Sutton-Brown in WNBA

Tammy Sutton-Brown became the first Markham resident to be selected in April's WNBA draft as the Charlotte Sting selected the 6-foot-4 Rutgers University graduate in the second round.

A starting centre for the Sting, Sutton-Brown, 23, played a major role in helping her team, which finished the regular season in fourth place, reach the WNBA finals before losing to the Los Angeles Sparks.

During the regular season, Sutton-Brown was the club's fourth-leading scorer averaging 6.8 points a game and started 21 of 29 games. In the playoffs she averaged 7.5 points a game.

Deacon a junior champ

J.C. Deacon was a hit on the links this past season. The 18-year-old Unionville native was selected to play for the Canadian men's junior national golf team in January.

While with the team in April, Deacon fired a team-best, three-round total of 211 to lead the squad to a victory over Mexico and berth in the World Junior Golf Team Championships in Japan in June.

Earning a golf scholarship at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas, Deacon also became the first golfer since 1962 to win back-to-back junior provincial championships after taking this year's 72-hole event at the Timberwolf Golf Club in Sudbury with a 12-under 276.

Asaro moving up ladder

Nineteen-year-old Markham resident Billy Asaro is working his way up the auto racing ranks after becoming the first Canadian to capture the Road to Indy Oval Crown championship.

Asaro took the title after amassing the most points in the series of oval races within the USF 2000 National Championship. In that series, Asaro settled for a second-place finish in the overall championship points race.

When it ended, Asaro made his debut in the Cart Toyota Atlantic Indy Lights series and finished 14th at the series finale in California.

Before the year ended, Asaro went to Wales where he test drove a Formula Three vehicle, which is a stepping stone towards his ultimate goal — to race in the prestigious Formula One series.

Scott earns scholarship

Arnel Scott, the 18-year-old Milliken Mills High School basketball standout accepted a scholarship to attend Boston College and play for its basketball team next fall.

Currently in his senior year at Milliken Mills High School, the 6-foot-4 guard, was also a member of the provincial basketball team that competed this past summer in the Canada Summer Games.

Off the basketball court, Scott became the fourth Markham resident to receive the Harry Jerome Award in the athletics category.

Macri a rising racing star

Coming off a season in which he won the Canadian Formula Ford Championship series a year ago, Jonathan Macri made his presence felt in his rookie campaign in the CART Toyota Atlantic Championship series.

The 18-year-old Gormley resident would eventually earn his first podium finish in August after placing second at the Elkhart Lake, Wisc., four-mile Road America road course.

In addition to clinching his first podium finish, Macri won the $1,000 WorldCom "Fast Pace" award with his record-setting lap of 2:02.688 seconds. Macri concluded his rookie season with a fifth-place finish in the series and the Toyota Atlantic series' Rising Star Award.

Gormley's Dale Boadway played catcher in last year's Canadian softball championships.

Boadway getting noticed

Dale Boadway was among 37 recipients who was awarded the James Worrall Athletes Development Fund grant given to promising young amateur athletes in Ontario.

The 17-year-old Gormley resident was nominated by Softball Ontario for his achievements in being selected to the all-star team at last year's Canadian Championships as a catcher. He was named the tournament's top batter.

At the Eastern Canadian Championships two years ago, he was named all-star catcher. Boadway received a $500 grant at a presentation at the Sport Alliance of Ontario in Toronto on June 26.

Multi wins for Smith

A member of the Stouffville Striders Track Club, Stephanie Smith had a successful season on the outdoor and indoor circuit in 2001.

Competing in the atom girls' division, the 11-year-old Smith ran off with titles in the 800-metres and 1,500-m distances at the Ontario Minor Track Association's provincial outdoor championships in Oshawa.

For Smith, a second-year member of the Striders, those accomplishments came on the heels of winning the same events in the provincial indoor circuit.

At the recent International Youth Meet of Champions at York University, Smith set an indoor age group record in the 3,000-m after winning the race in 10:42.

Wood leads Spartans

In her first year at Stouffville District Secondary School in 2001, 16-year-old Stouffville resident Dana Wood earned several honours with the Spartans' track and field team.

Wood finished fifth at the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Association championships in the 200-m and 400-m races. As well, she was part of a 4 x 100-m midget girls' relay team that claimed a bronze.

This past summer, Wood finished second in the midget girls' 400-m race at the Legion provincial championships.

At the Ontario Track and Field Association Super Meet, Wood was just nipped at the wire in the 400-m in a time of 58.1 seconds.