

## SPORTS



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION/ROB ALARY

## Time to shine



STAFF PHOTO/ERIN RILEY

York Region residents heading to the 2002 Winter Olympics are (at top) hockey player Curtis Joseph, figure skater Emanuel Sandhu, figure skater Elvis Stojko, figure skater Lenny Faustino, freestyle skier Veronica Brenner and referee Jacquie Palm (above).

## On ice and snow, our Olympians tackle the world

As hockey yarns go, it has a pretty good spin. Despite a badly dislocated shoulder, the young goaltender's underdog Jr. B hockey team so desperately needed him in the playoffs, a harness-like device was rigged up and attached to the net, allowing him to play.

Despite the handicap, the story goes, the youngster performed admirably in a losing cause for the King City Dukes.

Many years later, the National Hockey League star is hoping for the chance to backstop Canada's fortunes in men's hockey at the Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City.

The story about the harness is a local legend, yet the tale is testament to Curtis Joseph's determination. A calling card of sorts, especially in pressure cooker situations. Often in his 12-year career with three NHL teams, including the Toronto Maple Leafs, the East Gwillimbury Minor Hockey Association graduate has breathed life into otherwise lifeless playoff teams.

The season in King City launched Mr. Joseph through Tier II Jr. A in Richmond Hill and on to the Notre Dame Hounds, then to a scholarship to the University of Wisconsin and a free agent contract with the St. Louis Blues.

"It (the shoulder) popped out about 10 times and I finally had surgery after my first season of pro," Mr. Joseph, 34, recalled last week, dismissing the rest of the story with a grin. "I'm just fortunate that it didn't come out dur-

ing my season at Notre Dame or (two seasons) at Wisconsin."

Mr. Joseph's stature among the top goaltenders in the NHL is beyond dispute. Nevertheless, the veteran, who recently played in his 700th NHL game, eagerly awaits the tournament starting Feb. 15 against Sweden.

With Monday's announcement Dallas Stars' Ed Belfour will be the No. 3 man, it becomes a choice between Mr. Joseph and New Jersey Devils goalie Martin Brodeur.

"Even if they don't make a decision to go with one guy, maybe they feel it's best right now not to close their options," said Mr. Joseph, speculating pre-medal round games could be split between two or all three men.

The men's hockey team will be scrutinized more than any

More Olympic profiles, page 27.



Kathleen Griffin

Been There, Done That

## Sometimes skating is not just skating

I figured I had this one down pat. I've been skating since age two. Many of my childhood winters were spent on my family's back yard rink in Montreal or playing shinny in the outdoor rinks around the neighbourhood.

I remember changing from figure skates to boys skates when I was about 10, at my father's insistence. With five girls (no boys) in the family, I guess he thought it was one way he could really get involved. Our ballet, Irish dancing and horseback riding lessons didn't do much to feed his love of hockey, nor his considerable skill at playing the game and teaching it to us.

Now, just a tad older, I thought the switch to speed skates wouldn't be that hard. Over time, especially during Winter Olympic years featuring exciting Canadian success stories, I've often thought speed skating was something I could do reasonably well. Skating is skating, right?

"Drop in anytime," invited both Don Ego of Newmarket and Gary Witney of Markham, respective heads of York Region's sister speed skating clubs.

Members total about 50, including children and seniors, and they skate

See BLADES, page 27.

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