

SPORTS

No complaints from Snowball after Memorial Cup loss

Markham resident was thrilled to make national junior final

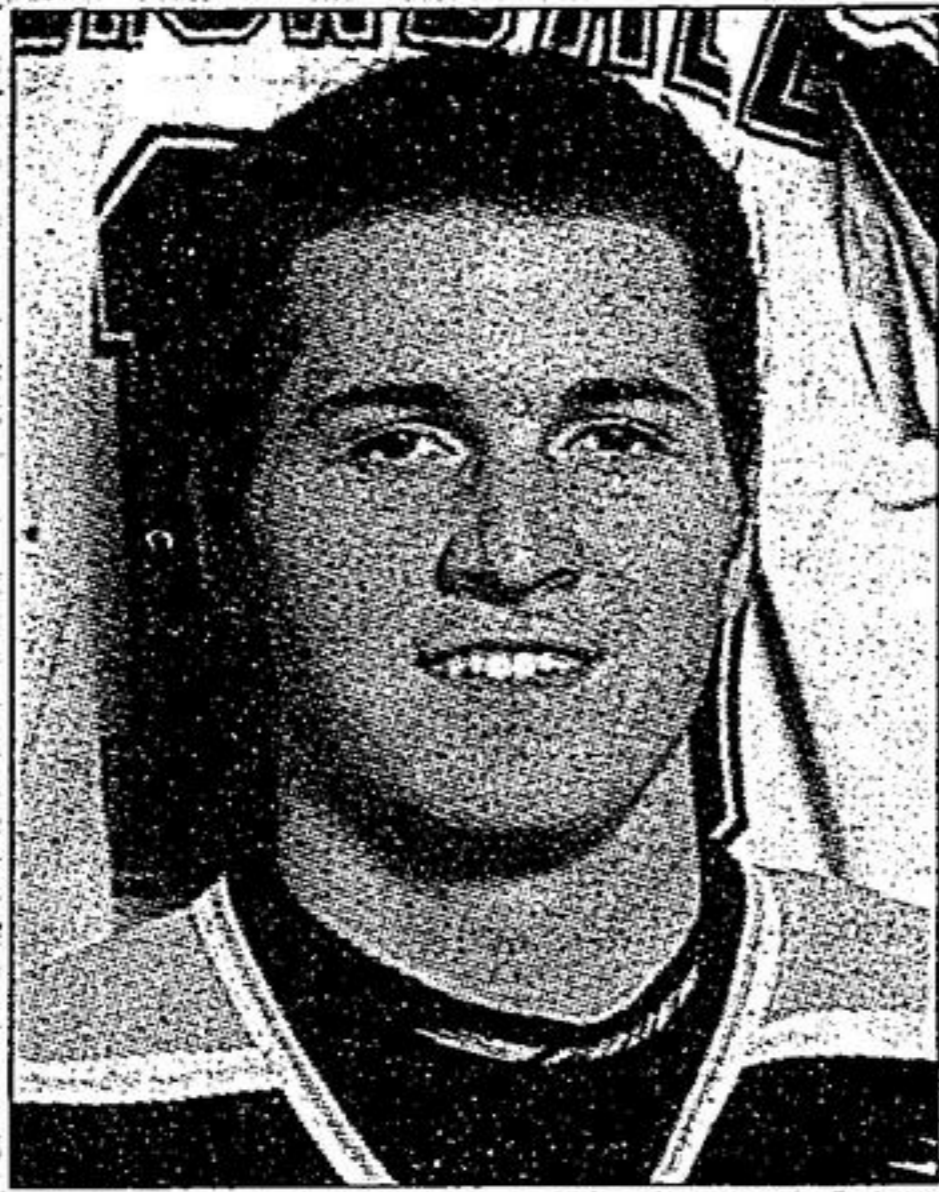
BY MIKE HAYAKAWA
Staff Writer

Although the clock struck midnight on the Victoriaville Tigres' Cinderella-like hockey season last Sunday after they suffered a 6-3 loss to the Kootenay Ice in the Memorial Cup final, you won't hear any complaints from Tigres' right winger Robert Snowball.

If the 20-year-old Markham resident had his way, the Tigres would have been skating around the Guelph Memorial Gardens with the prized Memorial Cup in their possession.

In accentuating the positive though, Snowball said the privilege to participate in an event of this magnitude is something a lot of major junior A players might never get the opportunity to fulfill.

"It would have been nice to win the Memorial Cup," the 6-foot-4, 220-pound forward



ROBERT SNOWBALL: Victoriaville forward scored two goals and added one assist in tournament.

acknowledged from his Victoriaville residence on Monday. "But we're not going to complain. This (going to the Memorial Cup tournament) was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. There's guys in the NHL who play 15 years and don't get to play in a Stanley Cup final. In major junior hockey, you might have only three or four years to do it. You never forget it."

Amassing two goals and one assist in the tournament, Snowball lit the red light for the

first time in the club's second game, a 5-1 loss to the Erie Otters on a power play.

In the club's third game, which resulted in a 3-2 win over the Ice, Snowball scored a goal that enabled the Tigres to break a 1-1 tie.

Snowball felt that win was the elixir his club needed to go on a roll. Snowball proved to be prophetic as the Tigres defeated host Guelph 4-3 and the Otters 5-4 in overtime in a tiebreaker match to play the Ice for all of the marbles.

In the final, Snowball earned an assist on a goal by Matt Lombardi, which enabled him to become the leading scorer in the Memorial Cup tournament.

Reflecting on their demanding schedule, Snowball said playing three games in three days eventually took its toll.

"But we put ourselves in that situation by not putting out hard in our first two games.

"To make the final was awesome. We went as far as we could in Canada. It was just a matter of who was going to come out on top. To be second out of 55 teams in the CHL isn't bad at all," he said.



STAFF PHOTO/ROB ALARY

A SAFE ARRIVAL AT HOME

Markville Secondary School Mavericks' baserunner Kristina Koitsopoulos avoids being caught in a rundown and slides in safely under the tag of Stouffville District Secondary School Spartans catcher Lori Sasaki to score a run during Monday's YRAA girls' softball contest at Memorial Park. The Spartans, however, received a three-run homer from Jacquie Harris and four-hit efforts from Megan Crowder and Sasaki to emerge with a 9-1 win. Kaitlyn Buck struck out eight hitters to earn the win. On Wednesday, the Spartans finished its regular season with a 17-1 win over Alexander Mackenzie Secondary School at Memorial Park and wrapped up second place with a 3-2 mark in the south division. Harris belted two homers and Buck was the winning pitcher. The Spartans will face Aurora in a quarter-final game at Memorial Park on Monday at 3:30 p.m.

Stouffville lets win slip away

SPORTS DIGEST

The Stouffville Mennos saw a four-run advantage disappear in one inning as they suffered a 6-4 loss to Mount Albert in Oshawa City and District Softball League action Thursday in Mount Albert.

With the Mennos nursing a 4-0 lead through 5 1/2 innings, Mount Albert made the most of five hits and two walks to produce six runs.

Rich Burkholder collected two of four hits the Mennos generated in the game. As well, he drove in two runs, including the game's first run in the third inning, and scored a run.

Terry Reesor drilled a single and drove in a Stouffville run in the fourth inning.

Rino Dambrosio belted a triple and scored one of two Mennos' runs in the fifth inning.

Byron Baranieski worked five plus innings before giving way to Reesor.

On Wednesday, the Mennos were to play TSO Sportswear, but won the game by default as the Oshawa-based team failed to show up at Memorial Park.

Now 5-2 on the season, the Mennos are slated to host Lake Simcoe (Keswick) this Wednesday at Stouffville Memorial Park at 8:30 p.m.

Asaro averts disaster

Billy Asaro's driving skills came into play as he steered his Formula Three vehicle from last to fourth in a British Formula Three Scholarship Class race on a rain-soaked Croft Circuit near Leicester, England last Saturday.

Starting in the fifth position, the Unionville native's engine stalled as the green flag came out. Asaro managed to restart and worked his way back into the pack and challenged for second place as the race was winding down before settling in fourth.

The British Formula Three championship heads to Silverstone for another pair of races this weekend.



BILLY ASARO

Overcomes bad start to finish fourth.

Old faces help Raiders kick off season

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA
Staff Writer

Are you ready for some football?

The Markham Raiders men's football team insist they're ready to kick off their Northern Football Conference season and will do so today when they embark on their nine-game schedule with a contest at Centennial Park against the Sudbury Spartans at 7 p.m.

Raiders co-head coach Bill Ptolemy, who was coerced by the team to return to the head reins along with Doug Young, feels this year's club has the potential to improve on last season's dismal 3-5 record.

"So far in our practices I think we're looking good. We've added some speed to our lineup and we've got some of our old veterans back," he said.

What has Ptolemy sounding upbeat is the reacquisition of several familiar faces and the extra year of maturity gained by those rookies who received their gridiron baptism last season.

The club's biggest off-season acquisition was the return of Gifford Rose, who will bolster the club's offence and special teams as he doubles as a

wide receiver and kickoff returner. The Markham District High School graduate was an all-star last season with Mississauga, but opted to return to the Raiders where he was also a league all-star.

On defence, the club reinforced its secondary with the return of Adrian Thorne, who will occupy one of the cornerback positions.

Ptolemy noted that Thorne also played a hand in recruiting as he brought a friend from Texas in quarterback Danny Custer, who is in Canada on a student visa.

Custer is expected to battle Jamie Fox, who started last year, for the number one signal calling spot.

Ptolemy also expects his club will have a solid running game, led by tailback Brendt Barrett and an offensive line that averages close to 300 pounds and is led by centre and team captain Jeremy Thorpe.

Anchoring the defence is middle linebacker Mike Drury, who made the NFC all-star team last year, along with ends Gary Fraser and Jim Canale.

"We've been working pretty hard in our practices and I think we'll surprise some people," Ptolemy predicted.



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