

Economist & Sun • Stouffville Tribune

SPORTS



STAFF PHOTOS/JOERD WITTEVEEN

SIZING UP THE SITUATION

Markham Lawn Bowling Club member Verna Rowat indicates how wide she was with her bowl in a match against Whitby during the Bluestone Bistro Tournament at the Markham Lawn Bowling Club on Wednesday.

Di Leo hopes for home crowd inspiration at Molson Indy

Markham driver is gaining experience in his rookie year on the Barber Dodge Pro Series circuit

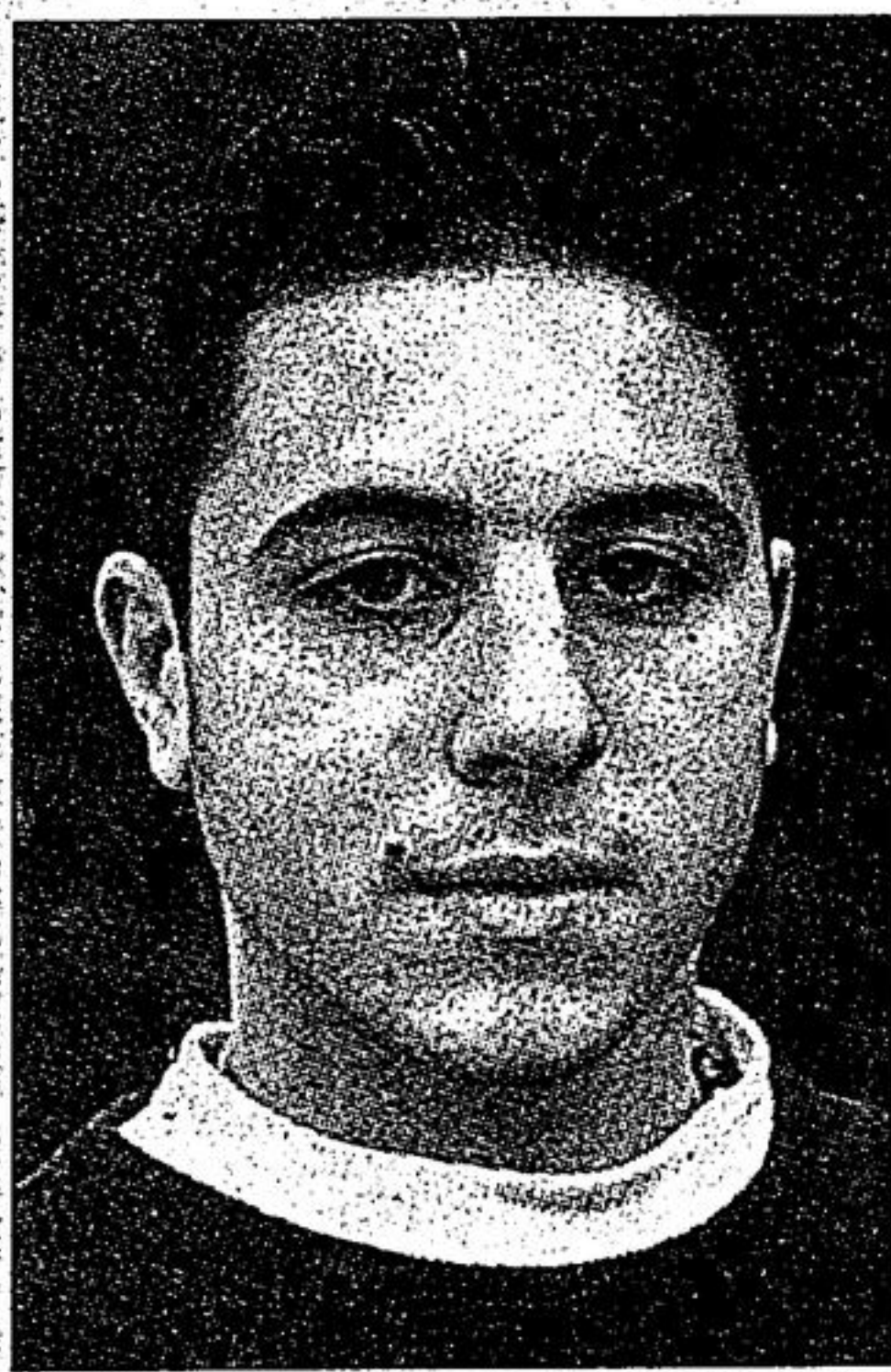
BY MIKE HAYAKAWA
Staff Writer

Daniel Di Leo hopes the sports adage of home field advantage will be a factor in auto racing.

With the Molson Indy set to take place this weekend in Toronto, Di Leo is returning home to compete in the Barber Dodge Pro Series race, which takes place Sunday at 11 a.m., prior to the CART/Fedex championship race at 1:30 p.m.

Currently in his rookie year on the circuit, the 20-year-old Markham resident is coming off an impressive second-place finish in his last outing two weeks ago in Portland, Oregon.

Racing this weekend in front of family and close friends, Di



DANIEL DI LEO: Markham resident finished second in his last race at Portland, Oregon.

Leo is looking forward to his homecoming of sorts.

"I'm heading into the race with lots of confidence," said Di Leo, who just completed his first year of studies at Ryerson University where he's majoring in business management.

"The car is working good right now, the set up is good and I know family and friends will be cheering for me."

Currently sitting sixth in the series standings and second in the rookie standings, Di Leo is quite happy with the progress he's made so far.

He acknowledged having a slow start. Part of it, he said, was due to inexperience.

"I had to pay my dues with the car; the veteran drivers have the edge in knowing their car and having more time in it and from there it all snowballs," he explained.

Reflecting on his season, Di Leo said the most important thing he's learned so far is the amount of work that has to be put in. Not just on the track, he said, but off of it as well.

Part of his offroad responsibilities, he said, is in searching for sponsors to help pay the bills in an expensive sport.

"I've been working pretty hard, but for me, racing is a job off the track just as well."

Molson gives rugby club a helping hand

Markham receives \$3,000 grant from Molson Canada to assist in clubhouse construction

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA
Staff Writer

When the Markham Rugby Club began the construction of its 3,200-square foot clubhouse a year ago, the goal was to make it as inviting as possible to players and spectators.

With the project — at Austin Park — nearing completion, the club received some additional support from Molson Canada.

Through its Local Heroes program, Molson gave the club a \$3,000 grant to assist in the installation of a new walkway and viewing deck.

Club president Jim Monk said the timing couldn't be better.

"Every little bit helps," said Monk. Noting the grant came about in rather quick fashion, Monk praised the work of project co-ordinator Colin Campbell, who had the initiative to contact Molson Canada.

"Colin found the brochure that Molson had on the Local Heroes program about six weeks ago and he filled

out the application and the company approved it.

"It was a bit surprising, but I think Molson is trying to be perceived as being good samaritans to the community," said Monk, whose landscaping company do exterior work on the clubhouse.

In explaining the walkway, Monk noted it will have three sections including one of interlocking brick from the player's entrance, another from the main entrance and a wheelchair ramp.

The viewing deck will be elevated and overlook the field. Monk noted it will be an area where spectators can watch the game from while having a meal or beverage at the same time.

If everything goes according to plan, Monk anticipates the walkway and viewing deck could be started during the next week and finished in just a day.

Now in its fifth year, the Molson Local Heroes program enables volunteer groups from across Ontario to receive funding to refurbish sports and recreational facilities in their neighborhoods.

On a separate note, the club will be a busy place today as the Markham under-12 and under-14 teams will make their home debut at Austin Park starting at 9 a.m.

Following those games the firsts, seconds and thirds host the Oakville Crusaders starting at noon.



Stouffville loses in a slugfest

The Stouffville Mennos got the offence they needed in Wednesday's Oshawa City and District Softball contest against the Claremont Rebels at Memorial Park.

But their defence was another story as six errors paved the way to a 16-15 loss.

Trailing 9-0 after a half inning, the Mennos countered with a run in the first and second innings and erupted for 10 in the third to take a 12-9 lead.



RINO DAMBROSIO
Drove in five runs in losing effort.

A run-scoring triple by Rich Burkholder, a three-run triple from Rino Dambrosio and a two-run triple by Chris Burkholder keyed the rally.

After Claremont responded with five runs in the fourth to regain the lead at 14-12, Stouffville retaliated in the sixth to take a 15-14 lead when Scott Eyre tripled in a run and Dambrosio belted a two-run homer.

The advantage was shortlived as Rebels scored twice in the seventh off losing pitcher Terry Reesor to win the game.

Now 8-5 on the season, the Mennos resume league play Wednesday at home against the Oshawa Juniors at 8:30 p.m. and then play at Mount Albert on Thursday.

Cougars lose heartbreaker to New York in fast-pitch tournament

The Markham Cougars advanced to the final of last weekend's Civitan Fast Pitch Jamboree in Kitchener before being edged 3-2 in a tiebreaker to the New York Diamond Girls.

Trailing 2-0 through three innings against a team comprised

of players a year older, the Cougars rallied with a run in the fourth and one in the sixth to tie the game.

Left fielder Meghan Sullivan enabled Markham to stay in contention with solid defence including four consecutive catches.

In extra innings after New York scored the go-ahead run, the Cougars came within inches of tying the game when Sullivan slid home on a play with two out, but was called out on a close call.

Finishing second out of seven teams in the round-robin with a 4-

1 mark, Markham received a three-hit pitching effort from Charlsie Searle to blank the seventh-ranked Guelph Gators 5-0 in a quarter-final game.

Facing top-ranked Scarborough in a rematch, the Cougars were backed by a strong pitching

effort from Joey Kyriazis, who had a no-hitter entering the final inning, before emerging with a 5-2 win and berth in the final.

The loss by Scarborough was just its second of the season.