

SPORTS

Dreaming of a gym dandy performance

Winstonette gymnast Jennifer Simbhudas hopes to compete at Commonwealth Games

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA
Staff Writer

Jennifer Simbhudas has competed in numerous gymnastics competitions. But when the 16-year-old Markham resident enters the arena as a member of the Canadian women's team at the Commonwealth Games in Manchester, England, she says it will represent a new chapter in her blossoming gymnastics career.

With the competition commencing yesterday and concluding Monday, Simbhudas will be making her debut at these games.

While excited to be representing Canada at the games, Simbhudas anticipates the overall atmosphere surrounding them will be different from what she's been accustomed to in other meets, which included an appearance at last year's world championships in Belgium.

"This will definitely be a different experience for me in terms of the different surroundings, an athletes village and different sites.

"It will be thrilling and I really want to compete," said Simbhudas, a Grade 12 student at Markville Secondary School who first took to gymnastics when she was four



JENNIFER SIMBHUDAS: Markham resident is making her first appearance at Commonwealth Games.

years of age.

An alternate member with the national team, which is coached by Andre Rodionenko and comprised of Danielle Hicks, Heather Purnell, Katie Richardson, Kylie Stone and Vanessa Meloche, Simbhudas earned her berth after finishing fourth in the all-round segment at this year's nationals in Winnipeg in May.

A veteran performer for the Markham-based Winstonettes Gymnastics Association, Simbhudas is taking a positive approach to the games and feels her appearance there will be another stepping stone towards attaining her ultimate goal in performing for Canada at the 2004 Summer Games in Athens, Greece.

"It'll be a good learning experience and I can relate to it," she said.

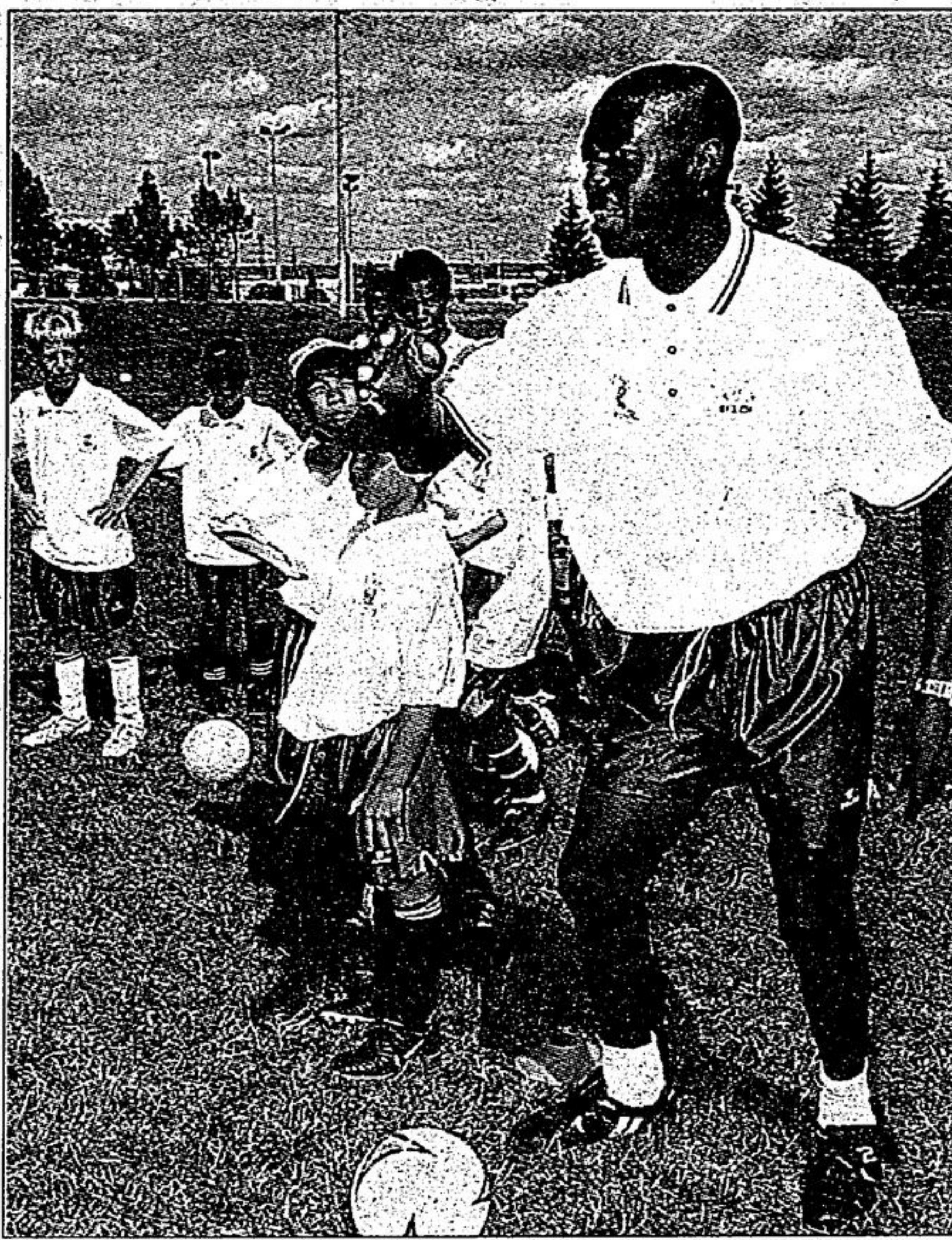
Not only will the games be a good learning experience for Simbhudas, but she feels it will benefit the entire Canadian contingent, which is a relatively young team overall with Richardson being the lone holdover from the last Olympics squad.

"This is a very young team, it's inexperienced but they'll learn," she said with assurance.

With the Winstonettes facility playing host to the club's training camp prior to their overseas departure for England, Simbhudas feels a good performance by her could be the break she's

looking for.

"I just have to try and be comfortable with myself in my events and in my routines," she said.



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

DOING IT TOBO'S WAY

Patrick Tobo, a former member World Cup performer for the Cameroon soccer team, teaches "Tobo Soccer" to a group of youngsters from the Unionville-Milliken Soccer Club at Milliken Park last Thursday.

SPORTS DIGEST

Raiders tame Panthers

Andy Taylor hauled in two touchdown passes from Jamie Fox of 14 yards and 65 yards to ignite the Markham Raiders to a 32-3 win over the Belleville Panthers in Northern Football Conference action last Saturday at Centennial Stadium.

Adrian Thorne, on an eight-yard reverse, Kevin Bremner on an 80-yard punt return, and Jason Tomlinson, on a 10-yard reception, accounted for the other Raiders' majors. Mike Bartolo booted two converts. Occupying second place with a 6-2 mark, the Raiders can earn home field advantage in the first round of the playoffs with a win tonight in their regular season finale against the Mega City Maddogs at Scarborough's Birchmount Stadium at 7 p.m.



Soccer men post win and tie

An early second-half goal by Nick Shelton enabled the Markham Soccer Club men to earn a 1-1 tie against CSC Velebit Karlovac (Oakville) in Ontario Soccer League action Wednesday at Mount Joy field.

The tie by Markham came on the heels of a 1-0 win last Friday against West Indies United at Mount Joy field.

Shelton scored the game's lone goal in the first half. John Moerman recorded the shutout.

Now 5-4-2 on the year, Markham will face West Indies United tomorrow at L'Amoreaux Park in Scarborough at 7 p.m.



Stouffville splits fastball pair

The Stouffville Mennos recorded a win and loss in play this past week in Oshawa City and District Softball League action.

Facing Scarborough in a rescheduled game on Tuesday, the Mennos received a stellar effort from relief pitcher Byron Baranieski, who fanned seven of nine batters he faced to help preserve a 4-3 win.

Starting pitcher Terry Reesor earned the win.

On Wednesday, the Mennos played

host to Oshawa Mickey Finns but came out on the short end of a 7-3 verdict.

Chris Burkholder delivered two hits, including a first-inning solo homer, and drove in two runs for the Mennos. Rino Dambrosio drove in the other run with a single. Baranieski took the loss.

Now 12-7 on the season, the Mennos will be in Meaford this weekend for a tournament and play TSO Gamewear in Oshawa on Monday before returning to Memorial Park on Wednesday to host Mount Albert.

ON THE LINKS



Dave Woods

Finding ways to create a straight ball flight

With summer in full swing, you've probably had the opportunity to visit the fairways and play a few rounds.

But are you plagued by the same old problems? If you are like most golfers your main problem is the slice where your ball curves from left to right for a right handed golfer and vice versa for lefthanders.

Here is a quick checklist for straightening out your ball flight:

1. Check your grip. When you have set up to hit a shot look down at your left hand. You should be able to see two to three knuckles of your left hand and no finger nails. If you were to look at your right hand you should be able to see some of your finger nails.

2. Check your aim. Take your set up position again and this time put your club along your toes and walk back behind your ball to see where the club is pointing at. The club should point parallel to an imaginary line formed between your target and ball.

3. Check your alignment. Make sure your shoulders, hips, knees, feet and especially your eyes are pointing in the same direction as the club as in tip number two.

4. Loosen that grip pressure. Most slicers hold the club so tight the club can't swing and rotate during the downswing, leaving the club face open or aiming to the right of your target.

5. The fastest way to get better is to visit a club professional.

If you try these tips you will improve your ball flight and have more fun with your game.

Dave Woods is provincial coach for the Royal Canadian Golf Association's Player Development Program and director of instruction at the Angus Glen Golf Club in Unionville. The 25-year-old Woods also worked at Meadowbrook Golf and Country Club where he was an assistant pro and a teaching pro, and at Glen Abbey Golf Club. Woods also works with Canadian Tour professionals Derek Gillespie, last year's Canadian Tour rookie of the year, and Jon Mills.

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