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SPORTS

Stouffville juniors sign a Spirit-ed trio of local bantam prospects

Spirit management is encouraged by crop of home-grown talent

BY JIM MASON
Editor

They'll put the Stouffville in Stouffville Spirit. The Spirit junior A hockey team has announced the signing of three Stouffville residents for the 2002-03 season.

Michael Lombardo, Lee Maxwell and Cale Tanaka join another Stouffvillite, second-year forward Jordan Mabley, on the Spirit roster.

Spirit general manager Ken Burrows, a Stouffville minor hockey graduate himself, hopes to sign two more local players this month.

In recent years, the Spirit has had one Stouffville player per season on its roster. Four or more will be a bonus for local fans, team officials hope.

"We've always been partial to Stouffville kids and given them every chance possible to play for us," said Burrows. "But this year, there is really an outstanding crop of coming up through the minor hockey system in the area. It's a tribute to the minor hockey coaches and other volunteers."

The Spirit opens training camp the weekend of Aug. 17 and 18 at the Stouffville Arena. Sessions both days run from 12 to 5 p.m. The public is welcome.

Lombardo, Maxwell and Tanaka, all 16, played for the Richmond Hill Stars AAA bantams last year, the AAA centre for Stouffville residents.

Lombardo and Tanaka are 5-foot-9 forwards, while the 5-foot-10 Maxwell can play defence or forward.

Maxwell is excited with the prospects of making the jump to the tier two junior A level. Especially knowing that he will be doing so with a couple of his good friends.



STAFF PHOTO/ERIN RILEY

The Stouffville Spirit junior A hockey club recently announced the signing of three local prospects who toiled with the Richmond Hill Stars AAA bantams last season: Cale Tanaka (left), Michael Lombardo (inset) and Lee Maxwell.

"We're excited about (making the move)," said Maxwell. "We've been friends for a long time. It was an easy decision and it's something we all wanted to do."

Spirit head coach Brian Perrin is also excited to have all three players in camp.

"All three players bring something different to the table," said Perrin. "The thing I like the most is that they are all gritty and play with a lot of heart, which is one thing we didn't have enough of last year."

"Michael is able to create a lot of good scor-

ing chances by finding the open ice.

"Lee has a quick release and is able to put the puck on the net more often than not."

"Cale has great speed and puck control skills and reminds me a lot of Mike Ramsay."

Ramsay, another Richmond Hill grad who played two years with the Spirit, signed as a free agent with the Peterborough Petes of the major junior Ontario Hockey League earlier this year.

The Spirit opens its eighth season in the Provincial Junior A Hockey League the week of Sept. 12.

A strange week of ball for Mennos

The Stouffville Mennos arrived in time for their regularly scheduled Oshawa City and District Softball League road encounter against Bradford on Thursday.

So did the umpires.

Missing, however, was the host team, which failed to inform the Mennos and game officials that their diamond was preoccupied.

Whether the game will be rescheduled or victory be handed to the Mennos on a default has yet to be determined, said Mennos spokesman Art Burkholder.

League rules state the visiting team and umpires must be notified by the host club 24 hours in advance of any changes, cited Burkholder.

"We heard nothing and the umpires didn't hear anything either," he said. "The host team is supposed to call us 24 hours in advance, but it didn't."

For Stouffville, this strange occurrence came on the heels of another one in its Wednesday home encounter against Lake Simcoe (Keswick).

With the score tied 3-3 entering the home half of the sixth inning, the Mennos had a runner on base with none out.

Throughout the game, Lake Simcoe players had been riding the home plate umpire, who had earlier ejected their starting pitcher.

At that moment, the home plate umpire had heard enough from the Lake Simcoe bench and waved the game off, giving the Mennos a 7-0 victory.

Now 13-8 on the season, the Mennos play at Lake Simcoe (Keswick) on Tuesday and return to Memorial Park on Wednesday to host Markham at 8:30 p.m.

Plenty at stake for golfers in Canadian Tour finale

Mandarin course plays host to Greater Toronto Open

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA
Staff Writer

When the Canadian Tour planned its 2002 golf schedule, the intention was to fill a void.

Absent from past years, tour officials cited, was an event in the Greater Toronto Area.

With this year's tour officially winding down during the week of Aug. 12, the creation of the Greater Toronto Open will solve that dilemma.

To be played at the Mandarin Golf and Country Club just north of Unionville, the Greater Toronto Open will see 156 of the tour's top

players from around the world vie for top honours. The 72-hole event has a total cash purse of \$150,000.

While the monetary rewards are nice, the players have other incentive for taking to the Mandarin's 6,722-yard, par 71 links.

Also on the line for the top five golfers on the Canadian tour's Order of Merit are exemptions in the upcoming Air Canada Championship in Vancouver and Bell Canadian Open, which is at the Angus Glen Golf Club in Unionville during the week of Sept. 2.

In addition, the top two professionals on the tour receive exemptions through the first stage of the PGA Tour qualifying school to be held this fall.

"The Canadian Tour has been away (from the Greater Toronto Area) in the last couple of years and the idea of (the Greater Toronto Open) is to expose some of the top

up and coming Canadian players," said Dave Colling, a spokesman for Golf Strategies of Canada.

Golf Strategies is jointly running the Greater Toronto Open with the Canadian Tour.

'I think we will have a whale of a show.'

"I think we will have a whale of a show," added Canadian Tour spokesman Marty Henwood.

"It's great to have support from the rest of Canada, but coming back to Toronto is huge."

"Toronto is the media hub and the golfers are looking forward to being here."

Playing host to some current PGA Canadian players — such as Mike Weir, Richard Zokol, Dave Barr

and Stephen Ames — the Canadian Tour has a good crop of professional talent from around the world.

Henwood predicts this year's event could be a "four-horse race" with a pair of former U.S. amateur champions in Hank Kuehne of Palm Beach, Florida, and Jeff Quinney of Scottsdale, Arizona, being possible front runners.

A winner of two events on the Canadian Tour this season, Kuehne is the 1998 U.S. amateur winner and the tour's Order of Merit leader with earnings of \$80,011.

Quinney is one of only two golfers who have made the cut in a PGA tour, Buy.com tour and Canadian Tour event this year.

Henwood also thinks strong challenges could come from Steve Scott of Florida, who won the Texas Classic earlier this year, and Oshawa golfing phenom Derek Gillespie, who is fourth on the

Canadian Tour's money-leading list with earnings of \$57,414.

The Mandarin Golf and Country Club is no stranger to hosting an event of this magnitude as it was the site for the Canadian Professional Golf Association championships in 1996 and 1997.

The 1997 event saw Weir lose in an extra hole in the final to Guy Hill of Florida.

For those interested in attending this year's event, daily tickets cost \$10 per person and are available at the Mandarin's front gate during the tournament.

The club is on Kennedy Road, two kilometres north of Major MacKenzie Drive.

On a separate note, the Canadian Tour is seeking volunteers for caddying and other duties.

Anyone interested should contact Jack Raino at Golf Strategies of Canada at (416) 466-7798.