

SPORTS

Macri third in Long Beach Grand Prix event

Jonathan Macri couldn't ask for a better start to the current auto racing campaign.

Taking to the streets of Long Beach, California last weekend for the second leg of the 2003 Toyota Atlantic race at the Toyota Grand Prix of Long Beach, the 21-year-old Gormley resident earned his second trip to the victory podium after steering his No. 84 NTN Bearings vehicle to a third-place finish.

The result came on the heels of a second-place effort in the inaugural race last month at Monterrey, Mexico.

Although he didn't take the checkered flag, Macri could find few faults with how his vehicle handled. As well, he had no qualms with the final result.

"Overall, it was an excellent race weekend. We walked away with a second podium finish and made some good gains on the car," said Macri, who qualified fifth on the grid for the 32-lap event.

Although the series doesn't resume until May 31 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Macri remains optimistic the momentum gained from the first two races will continue to work in his favour.

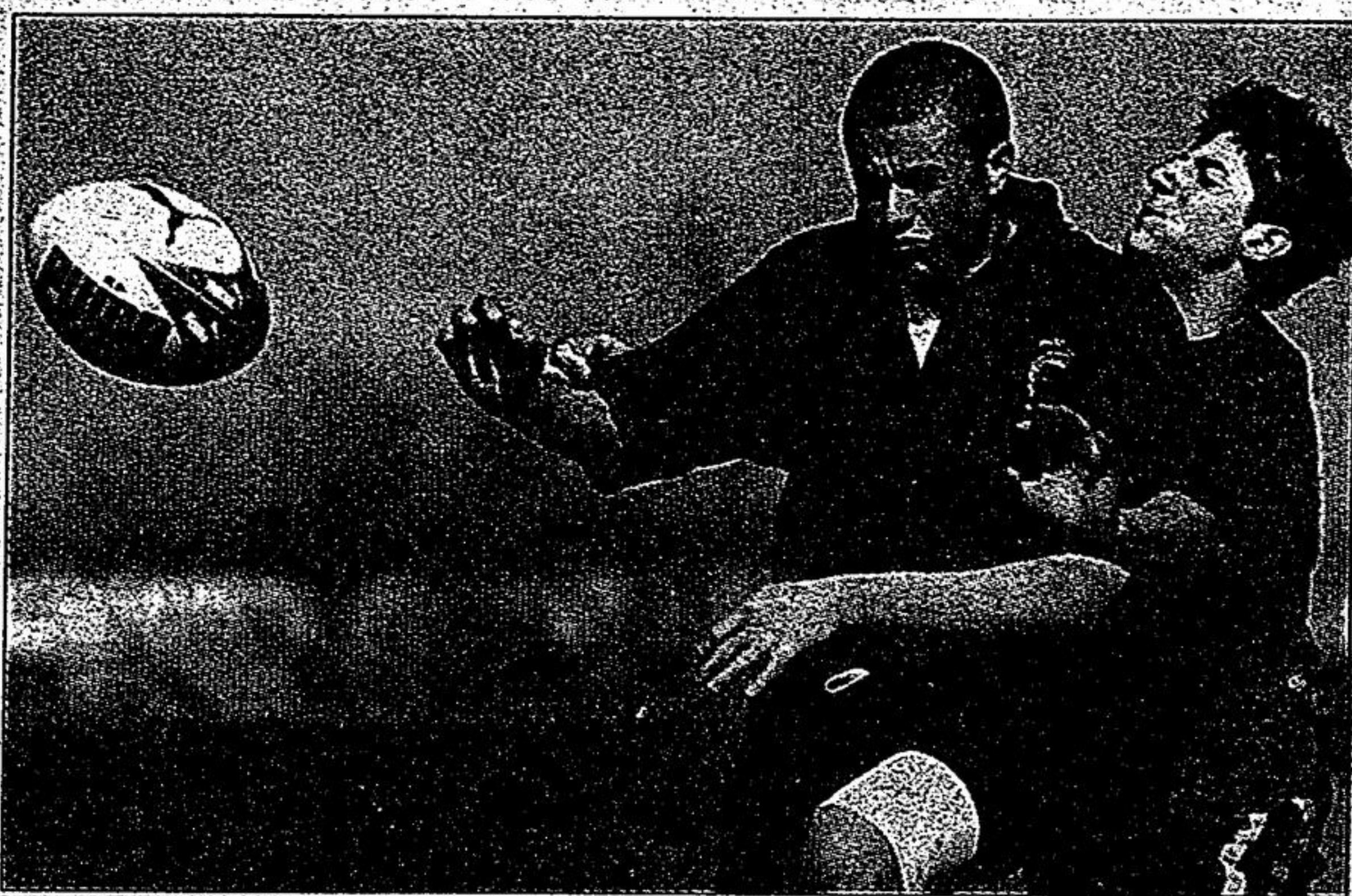
"Polestar Atlantic did a great job with the car and I think we'll continue to make more gains in the next few races."

"We've experienced some really good momentum in the first two races and we'll be looking to carry it over to Milwaukee, we'll be pushing for another podium finish there," he added.

A.J. Allmendinger took the checkered flag at Long Beach, while Aaron Justus finished second.

By virtue of his third-place effort, Macri maintains his second-place standing in the overall championship series standings, tied with Allmendinger, with 30 points.

The pair are just three points behind series leader Michael Valiante.



Here, you take it

Stouffville District Secondary School's Andrew Haines (foreground), laterals the ball off to a teammate before being taken to the ground by Father Michael McGivney Catholic Academy's Rami Accowmeh during Monday's preseason York Region Athletic Association senior boys' rugby contest at McGivney. The visiting Spartans prevailed 36-12. The YRAA regular season is set to begin April 30. The Spartans' first game is tentatively slated for May 5.

SJOERD WITTEVEEN PHOTO

Minor peewee Clippers second in Markham tournament

The Stouffville minor peewee Clippers ended their hockey season with a second-place finish in the recent Markham Islanders Tournament after they were edged 3-2 in double overtime by the Markham Waxers in the title tilt.

Tyler Azan accounted for both Clipper goals while Roger Ianuzzo, Steven Demelo and Denver Gray each earned assists.

In reaching the final, the Clippers battled the Richmond Hill Stars to a 2-2 tie in its first game.

Jason Deveny had a goal and an assist while Chris Glueckler added one goal. Azan drew one assist.

The Clippers then faced the Waxers and dropped a 5-2 decision.

Ianuzzo and Josh Montesano each scored once for the Clippers. Dean Glueckler, Gray, Chris Tambos and

Demelo were credited with assists.

Sparked by a two-goal effort from Azan, the Clippers turned back the host Markham Islanders 6-2.

Demelo, Andrew Mingay, Glueckler and Tom McLeod added singles.

Glueckler drew two helpers while Dylan Seymour, Mingay, McLeod, Paul Higgins and Tambos each had one.

Advancing to the semifinals, the Clippers received a two-goal effort from Demelo and singles from McLeod and Azan to edge Malton 4-3.

Seymour, Deveny, Gray and McLeod each had one assist.

Jake Robinson and Colin Hilts split goaltending duties.

Also contributing to the club's success were Casey Todd and Zack Stevens.



Midget girls runners-up in regular season, playoffs

The Markham-Stouffville midget AA Stars skated home with the silver medal from the recent North Metro Girls Hockey League Championships.

The Stars followed their second-place regular season finish by defeating Mississauga 5-1 in the semi-final match before losing to North York Aeros 4-2 in the championship game.

To reach the championship weekend, the Stars overcame a tough Brampton squad by taking the series four points to two.

The Stars won the first game of the series 6-3 and tied the next two games by scores of 1-1 and 3-3.

Scoring for the Stars were Lindsay Brown, Christine Upton, Stephanie Giliberto, Andrea Bevan, Jessica Lister, Ashley Lucas, Carolyn Fauteux, Emily Gamble, Danielle Beach, and Sarah Magee. Earning assists were Cassandra Sparks, Maddie Wilkinson, Erin Carter and Kristy Ashton.

Liz Knox and Sarah McConnachie shared goaltending duties and were solid in goal throughout the playoffs.



Minor hockey signs AAA deal with Markham

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA
Staff Writer

Representatives from the Whitchurch-Stouffville Minor Hockey Association couldn't be happier these days.

The same could be said for members of the Markham Minor Hockey Association.

What the two minor hockey groups are celebrating is a marriage made in heaven.

Just recently, the two groups reached an agreement where AAA-calibre minor hockey players who reside within the boundaries of Whitchurch-Stouffville can now play in Markham under a new association called the Markham Waxers AAA zone. This will include players starting from novice up to and including midgets.

The move takes place immediately, said Joe Cornacchia, president of the Whitchurch-Stouffville association, and Bill Jefferson, Markham Minor Hockey Association president.

In recent years, the Richmond Hill Stars were the AAA centre for Stouffville AAA-calibre players. Before that, the area AAA centre was the Lindsay-based Central Ontario Wolves. Stouffville players already playing in Richmond Hill can remain with the Stars organization.

In rationalizing the move, Cornacchia and Jefferson cited examples in which the two neighbouring centres share essential facilities like the Markham-Stouffville Hospital and students from Markham and Stouffville attend the same high schools and play for the same high school hockey teams in some instances.

"It's a natural for us," Cornacchia said.

"We had to get ugly this year."

"The whole thing in the past was ridiculous," added Jefferson, of the prior working arrangement. "With the good friendships that we've had through the years with Stouffville, this is a good move for both parties."

The two minor hockey association presidents noted the attempt by the two groups to form a working agreement had been in the works over the last seven years. However, prior amalgamation attempts were met with resistance by the Ontario Minor Hockey Association.

"We've been fighting the OMHA for years and they always said no," said Cornacchia. "We had to get ugly this year." By being ugly, Cornacchia revealed the two organizations threatened legal action on the OMHA. Saner heads prevailed.

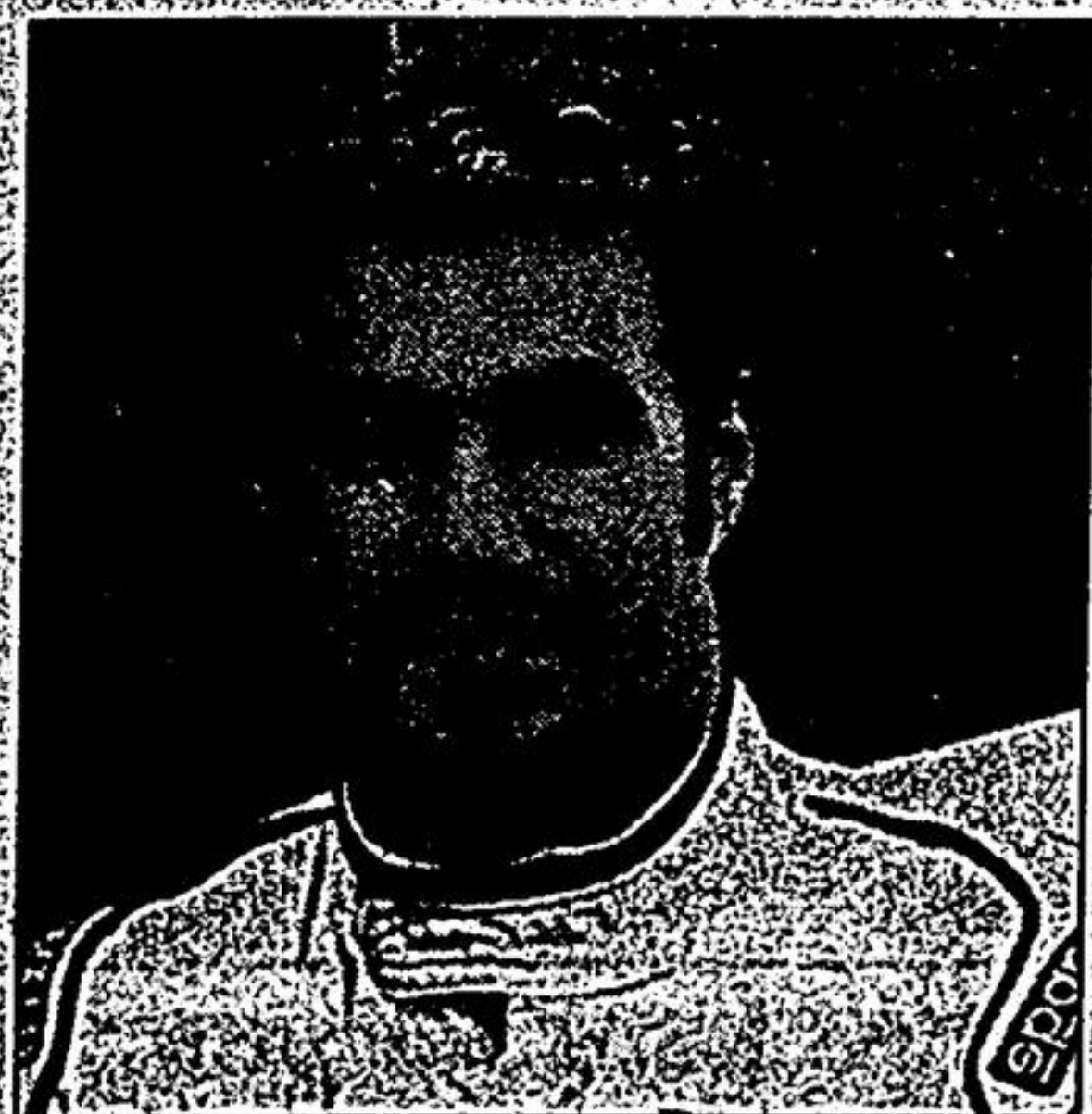
AAA team tryouts for the 2003-04 campaign start soon, and will be staged in Markham and Stouffville.

"During the year teams will play some home games in Markham and some in Stouffville. It's good for both centres," said Jefferson.



Whitchurch-Stouffville Minor Hockey Association president Joe Cornacchia (left) and Markham Minor Hockey Association president Bill Jefferson spent countless hours reaching an agreement whereby AAA-calibre players from Whitchurch-Stouffville can now play in Markham under the new Markham Waxers AAA zone.

MIKE BARRETT PHOTO



JONATHAN MACRI With two podium finishes this season, the 21-year-old Gormley resident is in second place in the overall standings.