

Stouffville players lead way to title

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA
Staff Writer

Last month, Jim Veltman and Glenn Clark won a National Lacrosse League title as members of the Toronto Rock.

Last week, the two Stouffville residents added a World Indoor Lacrosse championship to their portfolio, as they played a contributing role in helping Canada to a 21-4 pasting of the Iroquois Nationals during Saturday's final at Hamilton.

In winning the inaugural world title, the 32-year-old Clark said it was different from the NLL championship, when the Rock defeated the host Rochester Knighthawks 8-6.

"It wasn't as tough a road to win, but in another sense, to play for your country and to be part of the first world championship is exciting. It's an honour," the veteran defenceman said.

Veltman, 36, conceded the NLL title meant a little bit more to him

considering the circumstances in trying to win in Rochester for the first time and in playing against tougher competition.

But to be named captain of Canada's entry and to win a world title isn't chopped liver, either.

"It was a tremendous feeling and to be named captain, it says a lot about what others think about you. To have it all come together and win it all was most gratifying," he said.

Clark felt the turning point for Canada's fortunes took place in a preliminary game against the Iroquois Nationals, which saw their team squeak by with a 15-13 win.

"That game was a positive for us in that the Nationals kept us honest," he said. The gold medal rematch, he thought, was a little easier than anticipated.

However, he was quick to credit the preparation taken by the Canadian entry.

Cemetery being built on ancestral land, natives say

BY MIKE ADLER
Staff Writer

Trees were felled this week and a parking lot started for a new Markham cemetery that aboriginal people believe already contains the bones of their ancestors.

A national aboriginal leader who viewed the work says it shows First Nations need a policy to protect their village and burial sites from Toronto's expanding suburbs.

Charles Fox, Assembly of First Nations Vice-chief for Ontario, added he is certain many aboriginal sites have been desecrated by development in the GTA.

But because aboriginal people lack a policy on how they should respond, "we're always in more of a reactionary mode," he said.

"As First Nations, we still have that right to intervene at all levels," said Mr. Fox, promising to meet soon with First Nations who have lived in the area, including the Mississaugas of the New Credit and the Six Nations, to discuss a policy.

"We always have other means, litigation or otherwise. If we have to throw ourselves in front of bulldozers, we've done that, too," he added.

The 162 acres at Reesor Road and Steeles Avenue, sold by the province to Toronto's Catholic cemetery board in March 2002, contain a buried Huron village.

Descendants of those Huron believe it also has an undiscovered place for burials and they do not want bones or other artifacts disturbed.

Politicians have no right to make decisions affecting aboriginal people's history, argued David Grey Eagle Sanford, liaison for the Huron, Wendat Nation of Wendake, Quebec, a community that opposes the cemetery.

"They want to do it with all the lands and we're going to put a stop to that now."

In 1996, the province announced it was selling its holdings in Markham's agricultural east end. Its land bank, the Ontario Realty Corporation, promised tenants farming or living on its properties the first



STAFF PHOTO/SIOERD WITTEVEEN

Only a stump remains from one of the large trees cut down for a temporary entrance to a cemetery planned for southeast Markham

chances to buy them.

Two of six tenants on the Steeles and Reesor parcels were negotiating purchases with ORC when the agency announced a surprise deal in 1999.

A provincial zoning order was used to swap the Steeles lands for land already reserved for a Catholic cemetery in the nearby hamlet of Box Grove.

Markham council supported the switch and Mayor Don Cousens doesn't deny he helped set it up, in part because it turned cemetery lands along Hwy 407 into profitable commercial lands.

Those lands were sold to builders who are paying, in turn, to build part of a bypass road.

But presented with evidence from Mr. Sanford in July 2002, a justice of the peace in Toronto allowed a group called Environmental Defence Canada to charge ORC with failing to do an adequate environmental assessment of the Steeles parcels before it was sold.

Conservationists say the site, bordering Rouge Park and near the Little Rouge River, contains environmentally sensitive areas,

as well as aboriginal artifacts.

Environmental Defence's case continues to move toward a trial. Despite this, Markham councillors approved the cemetery's site plan earlier this year.

Council has never responded to First Nation concerns about ancestral remains on the property, Councillor Erin Shapero said.

"The town wanted it and the town helped to facilitate it," she said of the cemetery.

Mr. Fox, who is also Grand Chief of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation in Ontario and Mr. Sanford both expressed disappointment Markham had not waited for the court case to conclude.

The cemetery board has placed easements protecting sensitive areas on the property, including the village site, which is estimated at eight acres.

Lewis Yeager, general manager of Rouge Park, said he first believed the easement on the village would protect the site and not just the artifacts found there.

"Having read the easement, it doesn't," he admitted, concluding the village can eventually be removed as the cemetery develops.

Silver maples lining an old laneway were cut down this week to form a "temporary" cemetery entrance from Reesor Road.

The work was in another easement-protected area, part of a crucial wildlife corridor that is supposed to link Scarborough's Rouge Park with its long-awaited expansion to Markham and Whitchurch-Stouffville.

Yet by agreeing to these losses, the park and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority say they have bought time, perhaps 20 or 30 years, for the village site.

They say after Steeles Avenue is widened, the cemetery entrance will move there and the easement areas, some of them recently farmed, will be planted and naturalized.

"What was negotiated at the end was really a win for everybody," Ron Dewell, TRCA senior property manager, said recently.

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