

Stouffville Sun-Tribune

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Pro hockey fighter battles demons on, off ice

BY JIM MASON
Staff Writer

Brandon Sugden is tough. Just ask him. Mats Sundin sat out a game for throwing his stick into crowd. The six-foot-four-inch-tall, 225-pound Sugden served jail time for the same indiscretion.

On the website of all things related to hockey fighting (www.hockey-fights.com), he gets more action than Ie Domi or Matthew Barnaby.

One of his nicknames, Sugar, is tattooed on his back. After his front top teeth were chipped in a junior game, he told the dentist to pull them out rather do a repair; it would toughen the look.

But it was no on-ice brawl that nearly knocked the Whitchurch-Stouffville resident out of hockey for life.

IN TORONTO TONIGHT

Mr. Sugden's long and strange journey to the NHL stops in Toronto tonight, but not at the Air Canada Centre. A few kilometres west, at the new Ricoh Coliseum, Mr. Sugden, who turned 26 Friday, and the rest of the Syracuse Crunch tangle with the Toronto Roadrunners in an American Hockey League contest.

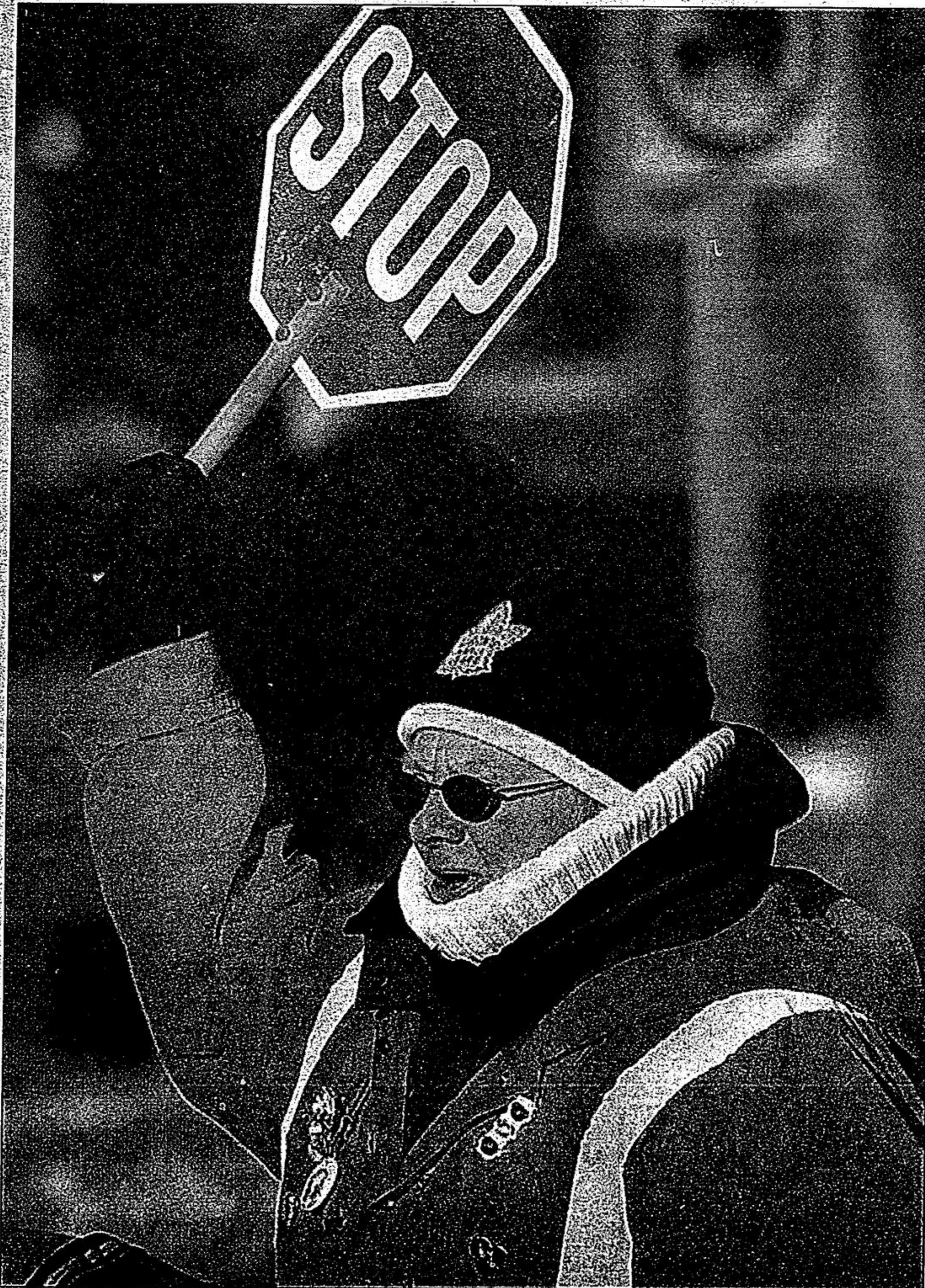
Syracuse is the top farm team of the Columbus Blue Jackets and the Roadrunners' parent club is the Edmonton Oilers.

It's the highest level at which Mr. Sugden has played.

A year ago, Mr. Sugden was playing in a weekend Quebec beer league and practising with the Stouffville Spirit junior A club, with little hope of a reprieve.

He had been banned for life from the East Coast Hockey League and

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STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEN

Stop the cold, please!

Stouffville crossing guard Sharon Norton is bundled up against the -15 C cold Friday afternoon as she guides her charges from Summitview Public School. She's been on the job at the corner of Main and Stouffer streets for 15 years.

ELIZABETH HADER DIED AT MUSSELMAN'S LAKE RANCH

Horseback death acquittals appealed

BY JEFF MITCHELL
Staff Writer

A jury's acquittal of two men charged with negligence in the horseback riding death of an Aurora girl in Whitchurch-Stouffville several years ago has been appealed by the Crown attorney's office.

Ontario's Appeal Court heard submissions last week on the appeal of the October 2001 verdict that cleared James Coultice and Scott Tarpey of criminal negligence causing death.

The men, employees at the Wagon Wheel Ranch at Musselman's Lake, were charged after 10-year-old Elizabeth Hader died in a riding mishap April 18, 1999.

The Crown launched the appeal shortly after the court case came to a close, but it has not reached Appeal Court until this month.

FATHER PLEASED

Elizabeth's father, Paul Hader, of Aurora, said he is happy the case has finally been heard. The Haders, who also launched a civil suit against the defendants, were left disappointed and bitter over the original verdict.

"I was very disappointed by the decision and very happy to hear there was going to be an appeal," Mr. Hader said.

Among the points argued before the Appeal Court last week were matters of evidence not heard by the jury, as well as a ruling preventing an expert on horse handling being heard as a witness, Mr. Hader said.

The appeal was handled by a lawyer from the Attorney General's Crown law office.

Bob McCreary, head Crown

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