

SPORTS

Leonard hopes history repeats at worlds

Stouffville resident wants to help Canada retain amputee title

BY JIM THOMAS
Correspondent

Shawn Leonard is headed for Prague, Czech Republic. And when the Stouffville resident goes there, he will be donning a red and white hockey jersey for Team Canada at this year's world amputee championships.

The competition, beginning April 25 and concluding April 30, will include the United States, Russia, Finland, Sweden, Canada and the Czech Republic.

Canada will be out to defend the gold medal it won last year in Helsinki, Finland.

The tournament is now sanctioned by the International Ice Hockey Federation.

The world hockey championships take place at the same time, but in a different arena.

PROSTHETIC LEFT HAND

A graduate of Stouffville District Secondary School and a member of Stouffville's 1982 Ontario bantam BB hockey champions, Leonard possesses a prosthetic left hand, a challenge he's learned to live with since birth.

"I never had it (a left hand)," says the 200-pound centre, "so I don't miss it."

Leonard began playing hockey at the age of four. For several years, he played in the Stouffville Amateur Hockey



SHAWN LEONARD: Played a role in helping Team Canada win last year's world amputee hockey title.

League and still practices every week with the Uxbridge Black Hawk oldtimers.

HONoured BY TOWN

Last fall, he participated in the official puck-dropping ceremonies to open the Stouffville Spirit Jr. A season. At that time, he was presented with a generous cheque by SAHL president Scott Dunsmoor to assist with travel expenses overseas.

"It was a total surprise," Leonard says, "and very much appreciated."

In addition, he was the recipient of a 2003 outstanding achievement award, presented by the town.

Due to the fact the team receives no government assistance, each player must raise \$2,500. The current roster includes 20 players, eight of them new to the team this year.

Tryouts were held at York University last November.

Leonard won notoriety following the championship game in Helsinki, last year when he took a page out of Wayne Gretzky's book and implanted a toonie at centre ice.

PLANTING TOONIES

The Leonard toonie currently holds a place of prominence in the Hockey Hall of Fame.

"I'm hoping to do the same thing this year," he says.

While the upcoming championships are uppermost in his mind, Leonard's also looking ahead to the 2006 Winter Olympics in Torino, Italy, where he hopes to play a part.

A supporting contingent of 50 relatives and friends are expected to accompany the team to Prague including Leonard's wife, Tara.

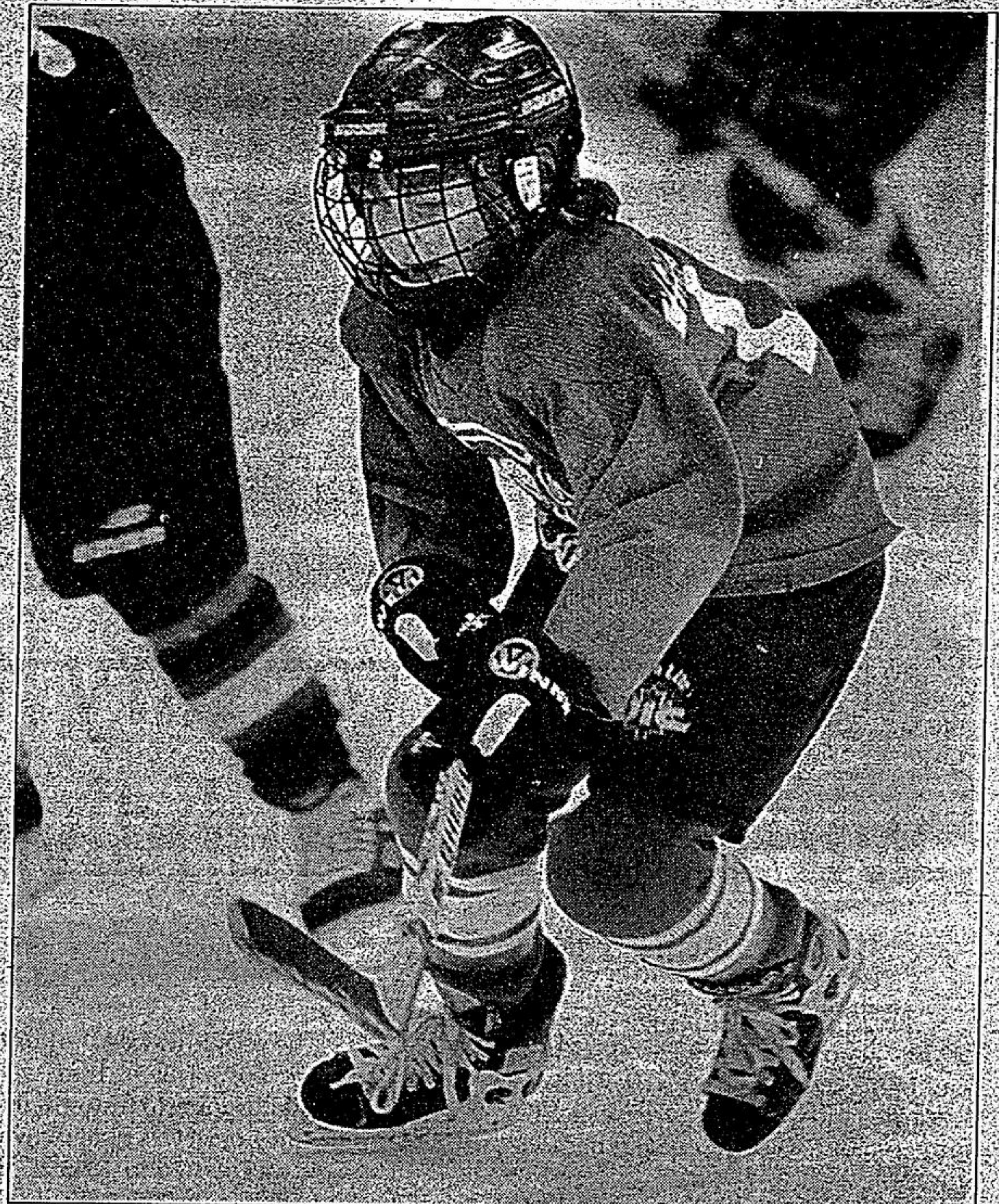
While their children aren't going, Brittany and Cody will support dad's efforts by wearing Team Canada sweaters to Summitview Public School during tournament week.

Brooke, age 2, will be content to wear hers around the house even though, according to Tara, "it comes down past her knees."

Leonard says representing one's country is "the greatest thrill a player can know."

"Standing at centre ice, hearing the national anthem and seeing the Canadian flag raised, is a sensation no one can describe," he concludes.

Leonard has done it before. He hopes to experience it again.



STAFF PHOTO/BILL ROBERTS

Moment of glory

Schollen Landscapes forward Hallie Wannop, 9, prepares to gather a loose puck and break in alone on net to score a goal during Monday's Markham-Stouffville Girls Hockey League novice A house league final at Stouffville Arena. Wannop's team, however, lost the game to Harry Bowes 3-1. For more scores from Monday's championship day, see Sportsboard on page 19.

Atom Stars win hockey title

Samantha Keen's goal proved to be the difference for the Markham-Stouffville Atom Stars as they captured the North Metro Girls Hockey League title last weekend with a hard fought 1-0 win over North Halton in the championship final.

Kristin Drew earned an assist on Keen's game-winning marker.

The Stars reached the final after going two overtime sessions to edge Clarington 1-0 in their semifinal contest.

Emily O'Shaughnessy scored the game's lone marker on an assist from Erin Murphy.



Prior to their game with Clarington, the Stars played a qualifier against Burlington and captured it with a 4-0 win in the third game. The first two contests ended up in ties by scores of 2-2 and 1-1.

SHOOTING STARS

Scoring for the Stars against Burlington were: Lynn Kennedy, three goals, three assists; Katie Mullett, Nicole Wannop and Suzanne Dickie, one goal, one assist; Taryn Deasley, one goal; Bailey Todd, two assists; Caitlin Maikawa and O'Shaughnessy, one assist.

Goaltending duties were shared by Sydney Mann and Laura Medland. Other team members are Danielle Porter and Katrina Adams.

Expectations high this season for McMullen in Renault series

Gormley resident to race Saturday in Phoenix

Dan McMullen isn't in Phoenix, Az., to sun himself.

While it might be assumed the 21-year-old Gormley resident is on a vacation, such is not the case.

He is going to compete in the North American Formula Renault Championship, which starts its 13-race series this Saturday at the Phoenix International Raceway.

After McMullen competed in the five-race Formula

Renault Winter Series Championship, he returned home with two podium finishes and the title of the Top North American Driver in his ATI Technology sponsored car.

ATI of Toronto has continued its support of McMullen for 2004.

WOODBRIIDGE TEAM

McMullen's team, AIM Autosport, from Woodbridge, is excited about the prospect of this coming season.

"We have very high expectations of Dan this year," Ian Willis, team owner, said. "He showed during the winter series the type of race craft

that it takes to be a winner."

"With so much confusion with CART and open-wheel racing over the winter, many support series like ours were in doubt that there was even going to be any racing at all this year," McMullen said.

"Now with that all behind us, I am looking forward to having a great season with both a top team AIM Autosport and ATI Technologies as a sponsor to help me obtain my goal of winning the Formula Renault Championship this season."

For further information on McMullen, log on to: www.danmcmullen.com

Sheffield students fare well at Mohawk

Members of the Sheffield Judo Club made their presence felt at the recent Brantford Invitational Judo Tournament at Mohawk College.

Lea Sheffield led the contingent after finishing first in the girls' 39-kilogram class.

Tressa Sheffield settled for second after nursing a lead in her final match

only to lose in the last 15 seconds.

Victoria Colclough, 7, lost her first match but emerged victorious in her subsequent matches to finish second in her class.

Brent Colclough, a blue belt, fought for the first time in an advanced belt category (blue, brown, black) and finished fifth.