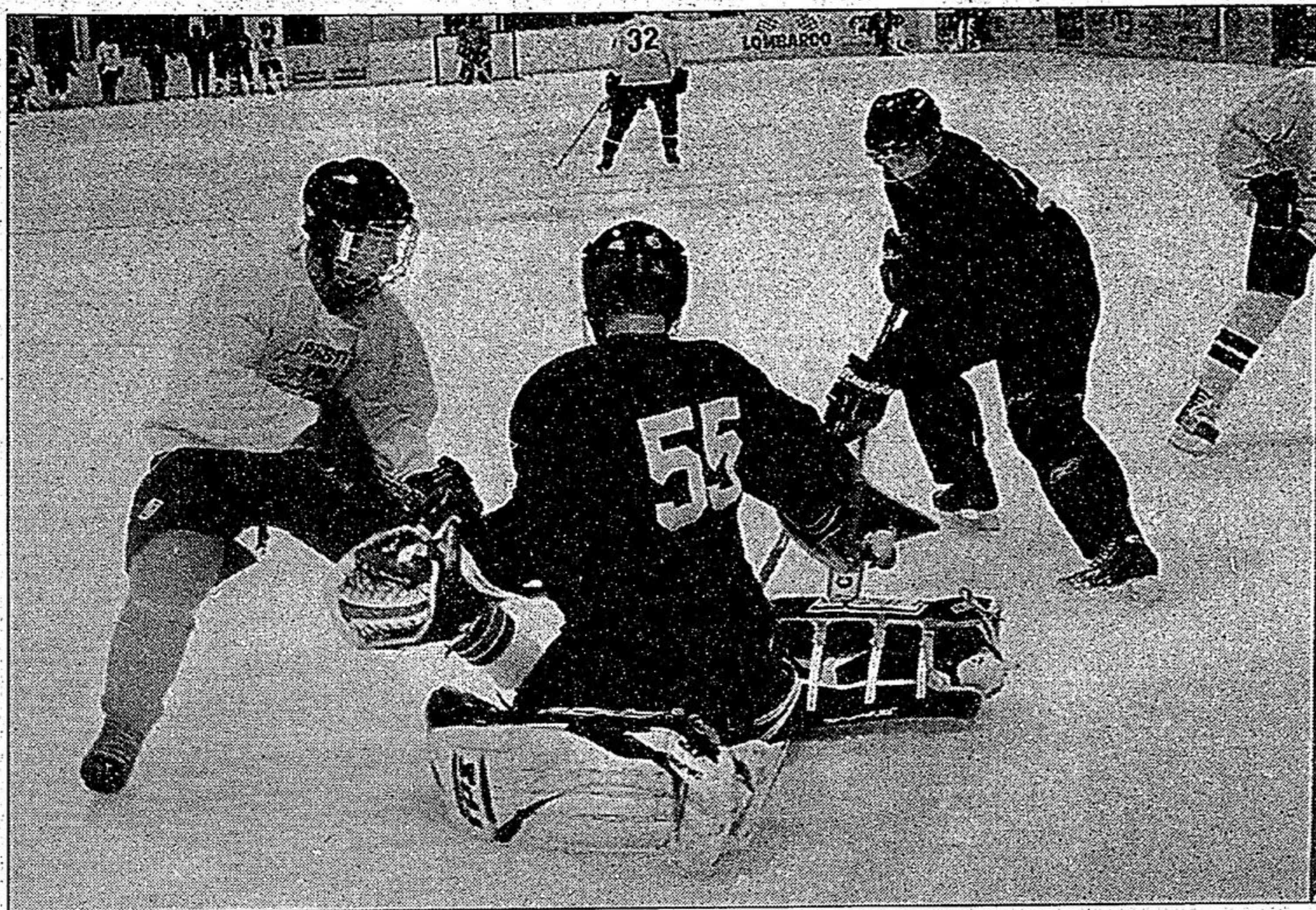


Stouffville Sun-Tribune

SPORTS



STAFF PHOTO/SUSIE KOCKERSCHIEDT

Spirited goalmouth scramble

Stouffville Spirit hopefuls Aaron Maltais (left) and Matt Hoffmann battle for the puck in front of goaltender Adam Davis at Stouffville Spirit training camp last weekend. The Jr. A hockey team hosts pre-season games tonight, against St. Michael's, and next Thursday, versus Markham, at 7:30 p.m. The regular season home opener is Sept. 15 against Newmarket.

Junior A hockey tourists hope to score big goals in Russia

Aurora Tigers duo to get their first taste of playing overseas

BY JIM THOMAS
Correspondent

Brandon Walker will be celebrating his 17th birthday this Sunday.

But the Stouffville resident won't be doing it at home with his immediate family.

He will, however, be doing it with another family.

That being the Provincial Junior A Hockey League team for which he will be playing for this season, the Aurora Tigers.

It also has the makings of being a memorable occasion as Walker will be doing it overseas in Russia.

Dealt recently to the Tigers from the Stouffville Spirit, Walker and the rest of his teammates, including 19-year-old Stouffville resident Cale Tanaka, will play a series of six exhibition contests in a 12 days.

Departing Toronto Saturday and arriving in Moscow Sunday, the Tigers will face highly competitive teams, including the under-20 team that will represent Russia at this year's World Junior Championships and power-



BRANDON WALKER: Tigers' forward will celebrate his 17th birthday in Russia during hockey tour.

house Dynamo.

"I'm absolutely excited," said Walker, who in his rookie season with the Spirit last year had eight goals and six assists in 40 games. "It should be an incredible and fun trip."

Tigers head coach Jermone Dupont hasn't set any high expectations in terms of number of games to win, Walker said.

In facing the under-20 squad, Walker anticipates that contest will be a large challenge.

But regardless of what transpires in the six-game set, Walker feels it will be a learning experience for the entire

team.

"I anticipate that it will be a different style of game with the bigger ice surface over there," he said. "And we've been given information on what to look out for when we are there, such as certain types of food to avoid."

A second-year forward with the Tigers, who was dealt to Aurora by the Spirit a year ago, Tanaka will also be making his first trip to Russia.

And like Walker, he is excited with the prospects of going overseas.

"It'll be a new experience for sure. It's something I won't forget," he said.

Compiling 12 goals and 19 assists in 47 games last season with the Tigers, Tanaka feels the trip will help the team gain experience in preparation for their upcoming regular season.

"We will go there to get some experience and to see what hockey is like on the world stage. We will be meeting some real good teams over there and we hope to get experience and have a good time in doing it," he said.

Walker noted the Tigers have been going full bore for the last three weeks in preparing for the trip, which will also act as a form of team bonding for the defending North Conference champions.

Stouffville roots spurred golf pro to career in game

Former Stouffville resident head professional at Vancouver Golf Club

BY JIM THOMAS
Correspondent

It's a long way from membership on a golf team at Stouffville District Secondary School to being the head professional at Vancouver Golf Club, but Randy Smith hasn't forgotten his roots.

The 44-year-old SDSS graduate admiringly recalls coach Lin Jones and a close group of golfing buddies including Steve Schell, Dave Raymer, Steve Middleton, Dave Huxtable and Mike Rehill, all of whom helped kindle his interest in the game during early teen years.

"Mr. Jones taught us the values of sportsmanship and fair play, of being gentlemen," he says. "I'll be forever grateful."

It was Don Smith, Randy's father, who initially inserted the key and unlocked the beginning of a fabulous career.

"My dad obtained a week-day membership at Rolling Hills and this provided me an opportunity to play," remembers Randy. He was 12 at the time.

Later, he worked in the bag room and the pro shop at Sleepy Hollow.

Under the guidance of Michael Schurman, Smith turned pro while employed at Credit Valley Golf and Country Club. His trip to the top took him to the Toronto Golf Club, Beacon Hall Golf and Country Club in Aurora, Whistler and Capilano in British Columbia and now Vancouver.

While at Whistler, Smith also taught skiing part-time.

It was here he met Karen, his future wife. They have a 3 1/2 year old daughter, Makena, named after a resort in Hawaii where they spent their honeymoon.

Smith spent seven seasons at Capilano as the club's senior associate pro. He became the head pro at Vancouver in 2002.

He'll never forget his introduction to the course.

HOLE-IN-ONE HELPED CAUSE

"I was invited to play in a club directors' tournament," he recalls. "The president was there and I wanted to make an impression. It was on the 7th, the signature par-three, that I sank a hole-in-one."

"That sealed the deal," he smiles. "I should have gone out and bought a lottery ticket."

Smith describes the Vancouver



RANDY SMITH: SDSS graduate is grateful for the lessons he learned in golf from former coach Lin Jones.

course as one of the best in North America. It's open 12 months and boasts a membership of 800.

"I hope to complete my career there," he says.

Smith's golfing expertise has taken him many distant places including Scotland, Mexico, California, North Carolina and Arizona. He also accompanied a team to Mauna Lani, Hawaii to compete in the American Express Classic. He came first in his division with a four under par.

Among the stops that Randy Smith made along the way included employment at Credit Valley Golf and Country Club, the Toronto Golf Club, Beacon Hall Golf and Country Club, Whistler and Capilano in B.C. before settling at the Vancouver Golf Club

Smith credits Phil Hardy of Beacon Hall, Gerry Chatelain of Capilano and Michael Schurman of Credit Valley with helping him along the way.

He once caddied for George Knudsen and received lessons from Al Balding. He also rubbed elbows with Moe Norman at several seminars.

"I love teaching the game," says Smith. "This is my passion. I've enjoyed great success with students."

He admits he's had the benefit of working at some of the highest level clubs in the country.

"I started at the bottom of the ladder and have loved every minute," he said.