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24 Bocce supporters aiming game at new generation of players

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Cerebral palsy can't keep youth football player down

Allowed to play tackle, confidence 'skyrockets'

BY SIMONE JOSEPH
Staff Writer

Born with cerebral palsy, nothing ever came easy for Christian Filtsos. Not crawling, not standing, not walking.

"He has to work three times as hard. Everything is a struggle," his mother, Elizabeth, said.

Still, the eight-year-old boy, who doctors said would never be able to walk or talk, has always managed to reach his goals through aggressive physical therapy.

But there was one dream his parents were skeptical about, especially for a boy struck with a disease that wreaks havoc with motor skills.

Christian had always wanted to play football. Not just touch football in the back yard, but real tackle football, with pads, helmets and cleats. The works.

Christian had liked the game since he was a little boy, playing around with his cousins and uncle at family get togethers.

But when he mentioned the idea of joining a real football team, his mother was worried.

"I was taken aback because it is football. What happens if he gets hurt? His recuperating time would be more drawn out."

Christian persisted, asking his mother if any elementary schools

Loose ball, get it!



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Stouffville District Secondary School senior Spartans Brad Whitingstall (from left), Jeff Gibson and Justin Brugger set upon a Mitchell District High School player during a tournament Thursday at Fletcher's Field in Markham. SDSS prevailed 10-5.

See FOOTBALL, page 16.

Cycle network eyed by region

York municipalities want inter-town commuting

BY ROY GREEN
Staff Writer

As a transportation option in York Region, cycling ranks right up there with "other."

A survey prepared for the region's 2002 transportation master plan reveals the number of cyclists is so small, it is combined with walkers and even then, only 7 per cent of 300,000 daily trips by residents fell in the "cycle/walk" category.

That compares to 79 per cent by auto and 6 per cent in the catch-all classification, "other."

The region hopes to change that by establishing a regional network of bicycle paths and walkways linking all nine area municipalities.

The planning committee last week approved a \$150,000 study designed to coordinate local cycling and pedestrian plans and look at the possibility of paths along regional road allowances.

Most area municipalities have proper cycle master plans or some sort of trail system, said Loy Cheah, manager of transportation planning.

"We hope to take their plans and stitch them together for a connected system across the region," Mr. Cheah said. "The local municipalities have asked us to assist with a plan for longer to middle-distance commuting between communities."

The plan could include some provision for

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