

Stouffville Sun-Tribune

SPORTS

The little town that could came up with big winners

Stouffville athletes, teams made presence felt during busy 2005

The 2005 sports scene in Whitchurch-Stouffville bore a strong resemblance to the story of the *Little Engine That Could*.

Like the little engine that defied gargantuan odds to get the job done, individuals and teams residing in what many people perceive as being a small town in York Region, put Whitchurch-Stouffville on the map.

Recognition wasn't just attained at provincial events, but in some instances it took place at the national and even world levels.

The following are some highlights from 2005 that made headlines in the Sun-Tribune sports section:

- Henry Brunton became the first Canadian golf professional to be included in Golf Magazine's top 100 instructors in the game for 2005-06.

- The 39-year-old Stouffville resident was a driving force behind the Royal Canadian Golf Association's player development program and head coach of the national team since 1999.

- Golf Magazine is a highly recognized U.S. golf publication and an authoritative voice on the sport.

- The Stouffville Clippers skated off with the Ontario Minor Hockey Association juvenile A championship that was capped off with a 3-1 win over the Harrow Rams (from near Windsor) at the Stouffville Arena to claim the first-to-six point series 7-1.

Several other local minor hockey players skated off with high honours in provincial championships.

Defenceman Mike Del Zotto was part of a Markham Waxers AAA major bantam team that claimed a silver medal at the Ontario Hockey Federation championships in Thunder Bay.

Chris Eyles and Justin Hitchin earned gold medals when the Markham AAA midget Waxers successfully defended its OMHA title with a 2-1 win over the Brampton Battalion in the final at Richmond Hill. The team was coached by Joe Cornacchia.

At the same championships, Nick Singh, a forward for the Richmond Hill Stars AAA midgets, helped his club earn a bronze medal with a 2-0 win over the Barrie Colts.

In the OMHA AAA peewee championships in Georgetown, Evan Bruno and Sam Carrick were members of the Markham Waxers entry that claimed the silver medal after they suffered a heartbreaking 4-3 overtime loss to the York-Simcoe Express in the title tilt.

In the girls' game, Liz Knox thwarted a penalty shot attempt in overtime and Lindsay Brown scored the game-winning marker to propel the Markham Stouffville junior Stars to a 2-1 win over Etobicoke in the consolation final of the Ontario Women's Hockey Association provincial championships in Brampton.

- Erik Salo, a Gormley resident and



Gormley resident and Wilfrid Laurier University Golden Hawks' guard Erik Salo hoisted the Vanier Cup, emblematic of Canadian collegiate football supremacy, above his shoulders after his club upended top-seeded University of Saskatchewan Huskies 24-23 in Hamilton earlier this month.

Markham District High School graduate, concluded his collegiate gridiron career at Wilfrid Laurier University on a memorable note by helping his club upend the top-ranked University of Saskatchewan Huskies 24-23 in the Vanier Cup final at Hamilton. Salo had been a starting guard with the Golden Hawks for the last two seasons.

- In high school sports, the Stouffville District Secondary School Spartans girls' hockey team came within a game of being provincial champions after falling 2-0 to Huron Park Secondary School Huskies (Woodstock) in the gold medal game in the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations A/AA in Orillia.

FIRST HOCKEY MEDAL

The silver medal was the first OFSAA girls' hockey medal earned in the school's history.

The Spartans senior boys' rugby team also came within a game of striking OFSAA gold after suffering an 8-5 loss to Trenton High School in the AA championship final in Belleville.

- The Stouffville Storm peewee boys ruled the ball diamond after capturing the Ontario Amateur Softball Association Eastern Canadian qualifying tournament at Memorial Park with a thrilling 5-4 win over Napanee in the deciding game of the double elimination tournament.

In winning the tournament, the Storm gained a berth in the Eastern Canadian championships in Placentia, Nfld.

At the tournament, the Storm settled for the silver medal after incurring a 7-1 loss to Napanee in the championship

final.

- The Stouffville Storm mites did something that no other Stouffville mite softball squad had ever accomplished by capturing an OASA A championship after defeating Kitchener 11-9 in the title tilt in Orleans.

- Nick Dambrosio's exploits on the ball diamond caught the attention of the Scarborough Wolverines, who picked up the Stouffville Jones Pools short stop to play for them at the Canadian Junior Fastball Championships in Saskatoon.

Playing second base for the Wolverines at the championships, the 21-year-old Vandorf resident helped his club retain the national title with an 8-0 win over the host Saskatoon Diamondbacks in the final and was named to the all-star team.

- Cliff Dunkeld was honoured by the OASA at their annual general meeting in Kitchener by being the recipient of the prestigious FR. (Frank) Memorial Trophy.

The trophy represents the highest honour bestowed upon any OASA officer, director or player. It represents outstanding service and contribution to the game of softball.

Dunkeld, 73, an OASA coach, convenor, umpire and auditor, has been associated with the sport more than 56 years.

- Gormley resident Jen Caira, 16, took matters into her own hands in the Canadian bantam girls' fastpitch championships in Cloverdale, B.C. by striking out the side in the decisive eighth inning and belting a two out, run-scoring single to help the Markham Jaguars edge the Surrey Storm 2-1 in the title tilt.

Caira was also named the tournament's Most Valuable Player.

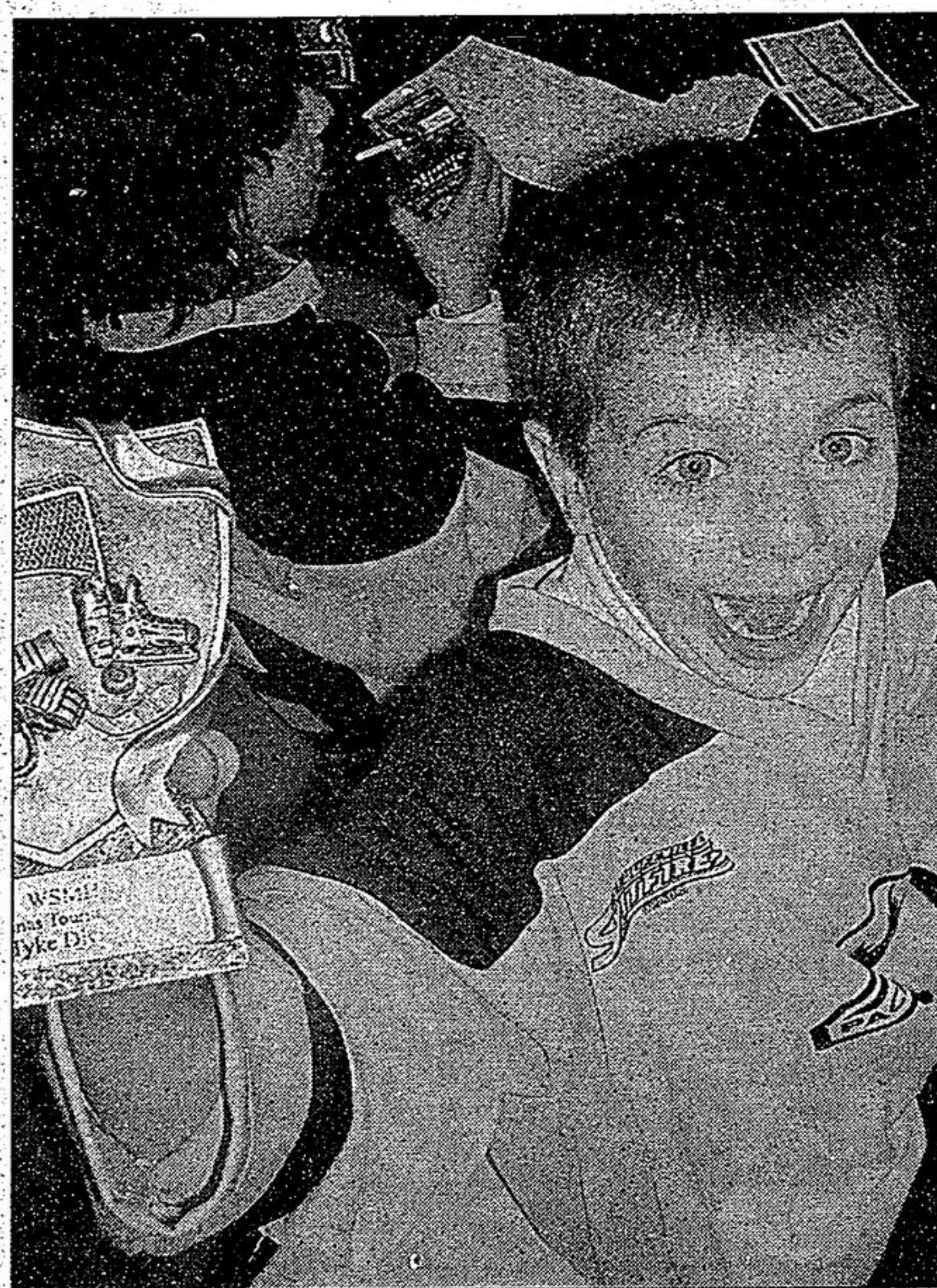
- Nicole Thompson, 11, returned to Stouffville with two bronze medals from her participation at the national taekwondo championships in Edmonton, Alta.

A student at Master Myung's Taekwondo Academy in Stouffville, the second degree black belt was third in sparring and patterns and accomplished the feat despite the fact she was in the low end of her age class that included 12 and 13-year-olds.

- Mark Varilov, 8, captured a gold medal in his age group after finishing first in the Provincial Triathlon Championships held at Midland. Varilov's older brother, Adrian, 10, was a bronze medal winner at the same competition.

- Kyle Miller, 15, took to the rugby pitch in Burnaby, B.C. this past summer to compete in the national championships and helped his Ontario team win gold in the under-16 division that was climaxed with a 15-12 victory over the host province in the final.

- Alysha Higgins and Kim Hord, both 17, were members of the Whitby Ice Fyre synchro skating team that earned a second-place finish as first-time participants in the French Cup in Rouen, France. The team competed against squads representing Finland, Sweden, Britain, Russia, Italy, Germany, France and the United States.



STAFF PHOTO/JIM MASON

OH, WHAT A FEELING

Tim Barker, 6, of the Packpro Systems tyke squad proudly displays his trophy following the Whitchurch Stouffville Minor Hockey Association's annual Christmas house league tournament Tuesday at the Stouffville Arena. Twenty-four clubs took to the ice in the two-day event.

Spirit keeps unbeaten streak intact at 10

LAST WEEK: Friday — won 3-0 at Collingwood.

COMING UP: Thursday, Jan. 5 vs. Huntsville 7:30 p.m. at Stouffville Arena...Friday, Jan. 6 at St. Michael's Buzzers, 7:30 p.m. at St. Michael's Arena...Sunday, Jan. 8 at Seguin Bruins, 2 p.m.

GAME NOTES: The Spirit gave themselves an early Christmas present and improved its unbeaten streak to 10 games with last Friday's 3-0 road win over the Collingwood Blues. All goals were scored in the second period, including Will Acton's game-winner, scored short-handed and unassisted. Scott Brown and Jake Van Allen netted the others. Dan McWhinney earned his second shutout of the season



for the Spirit, which was outshot 38-33, including 18-8 in the third period. The victory enabled the Spirit to remain in second place in the North Conference.

INSIDER: The Skate With the Spirit event, in support of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Foodbank, goes Jan. 2 at the Stouffville Arena starting at noon.

RECORD: 20-5-6-3.

Novice AEs finish sixth

The Stouffville novice AE Clippers earned a sixth-place finish at a one-day, eight-team tournament in Beaverton Tuesday that concluded with a 4-3 overtime loss to Orono.

Braden Clarke, Liam Timewell and Cody Leonard each scored once for the Clippers. Joey Hutton, Tritan Thompson, Daniel Renzoni and Jackson Newlands earned one assist apiece.

The Clippers began the tournament with a 3-1 loss to Woodville and followed that with a 1-1 tie against Beaverton.

Newlands and Quintin Volpe each had a goal for Stouffville in those two contests.

Leonard was credited with an assist.