

Rebuilding ball team still winning

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA
Staff Writer

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

Rugby team in first place

When a team reveals it is rebuilding, it doesn't usually bode well for its current fortunes.

That's the situation for the Stouffville District Secondary School Spartans boys' baseball team, head coach Jeff Fong acknowledges.

After reaching last year's York Region Athletic Association tier two silver medal, the Spartans were virtually stripped of their starting lineup through graduation.

Still, the new-look Spartans are 3-2. The latest game was a 12-2 thumping of Middlefield Collegiate (Markham) 12-2.

That win assured the Spartans of no worse than fourth-place and berth in the playoffs. However, a victory over Markville Secondary School (Markham) in today's scheduled contest would lift the Spartans into third place.

"This year we're mostly a team made up of Grade 10s and 11s and we have only two Grade 12 players," Fong said. "As a result we're a young team and not as talented as last year's team."

"You hate to use the term rebuilding but most of the guys that we have this year will be back next year."

"And in going into a new school (facility) next year, we might even attract a few more players."

Anchoring the pitching staff is Ryan Pontone, a rep ball player who Fong describes as the 'best player on this year's squad.'

"He definitely carries a big load for us," Fong said of Pontone, who also plays shortstop.

Also new to the pitching staff are Matt Easter, who is coming off a broken leg last year, and Peter Reesor, who played with the club last year.

Fong's biggest concern though is with his defence. Through its first four tilts, the club has not recorded one fly ball out.

"Last year we only made a few errors," Fong said.

Supplying the bulk of the Spartans' offence is Pontone, who Fong says is the club's most consistent hitter.

As well, the club has received timely hits from Phil Wood and Jake Carrick, a pair of players from the Spartans' gold-medal winning provincial hockey team.

Having just returned from England with his family, Luke Bartel has also been good with the stick.

"Luke is a good hitter and he carries a big bat for us," Fong said.

The Spartans senior boys rugby team remains atop the York Region north division standings after recording two wins last week to raise their record to 3-0.

Playing host to Sutton District High School, the Spartans received two tries from Dylan Stewart, along with a try and two converts from Matt Raguseo and a try and one convert from Kyle Miller in a 26-0 win.

The Spartans then defeated Emily Carr Secondary School (Vaughan) 45-0.

Stewart, Miller, Steve Simpson, James Beare and Joe Beare each scored tries. Craig McDowell booted four converts and Braydon Pettifer one.

The Spartans fell to Lindsay Collegiate Institute 12-0 in a semifinal of the Red Hot Tournament at Fletcher's Field in Markham Saturday.

Two of the Spartans' three losses this season have been to Lindsay.

"I was really happy with the kids. Our kids played great and they didn't back down against a team that was a lot bigger than us. I couldn't have asked for anything more," Spartans head coach Jamie Hewitt said.

Lindsay throttled Uxbridge Secondary School 27-7 in the championship game.

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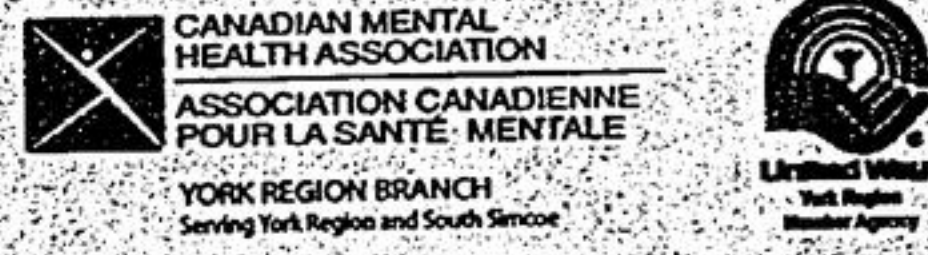
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Margaret Trudeau has suffered from the debilitating effects of her bipolar condition for all her adult life. Now, after seeking medical treatment that has given her life balance and happiness, she advocates strongly on mental health issues, helping people overcome the stigma of mental illness that often prevents sufferers from getting help. Throughout it all, she has kept her sense of humour and spontaneity. Her message is one of strength, resilience and redefining one's goals.

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