

'True Canadian' Ames praised

Presidents Cup snub can't spoil week at Stouffville club

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA
Staff Writer

Stephen Ames voiced his disappointment earlier in the week in not being selected for the international team that will play in the Presidents Cup in Montreal next month.

But the 43-year-old Calgary resident wasn't the least bit disappointed in spending this past week at the Granite Golf Club.

Watching a cast of aspiring young golfers representing Canada and Trinidad and Tobago on the east Stouffville fairways vie for a title named after him conjured memories to the San Fernando, Trinidad native.

What amazed Ames was the skill level the youngsters possessed, far more than when he started playing at 13 years of age.

"The kids today are awesome as compared to when I played at their age," Ames said.

Originating in 2005, the Stephen Ames Cup competition is a Ryder Cup style tournament pitting a select group of male and female golfers representing the Canadian Junior Golf Association Team Canada and an entry rep-



STEPHEN AMES: Calgary PGA player earns thanks for hosting international event in Stouffville this week.

resenting Ames' native Trinidad and Tobago. Among those representing Canada year are York Region residents Gajan Sivabalasingham, 13, and Julia Hodgson, 15, both of Markham and Hayley Brown, 15, of Newmarket.

Each made the team based on their participation in CJGA qualifying events staged earlier this year.

"My goal was to give something back to junior golf," Ames said of the event.

"That is to help kids from Trinidad and Tobago, being born there and to kids from Canada where I now live.

"What we want to do is to create more opportunities for them. Here, I'm contributing to this opportunity for the kids."

Ames said the idea for the competition bearing his name and involving 10 junior golfers between the ages of 13 to 21, was a joint effort between the CJGA, Nike Golf and himself.

Earl Fritz, CJGA founder and president, recalled discussions began about 18 months before the inaugural event teed off in 2005, which was also staged at the Granite Club. During that time, the Richmond Hill resident noted the CJGA had established a working relationship with Nike Canada, which in turn was sponsoring Ames. The three concerns got together and created the event.

"Stephen (Ames), Nike and the CJGA had a common goal. That was to develop young talent," Fritz said.

When the event was launched, Ames confessed he had no idea how successful it would be. But these days, he's quite happy with its direction. To that, he was quick to credit the CJGA, which has done the majority of the legwork.

"Anything the CJGA does it evolves into something bigger," Ames said. "Just the way they run things. I didn't really need to get involved."

Fritz said Ames has made great

sacrifices to make the event a success. As an example, he noted Ames takes money out of his own pocket to help bring the players to the event.

As well, he gives a clinic prior to the start of the competition comprised of Four Ball, Four-some and Singles play.

"Here's a guy (Ames) who's looking at trying to earn points for the FedEx Cup and he's taken one week off not being in any competition because this event is dear to him," Fritz said. "If you talk about heart and a love for the game and talk about giving back, Stephen Ames is now a true Canadian."

There's more than golf at stake.

"The event also gives each side a chance to meet new friends, learn about different cultures so for example Canadian youngsters can see how kids in Trinidad and Tobago live and vice versa.

"As well, the players will learn about the different playing conditions in each of the countries.

"For example, in Canada they play on bent grass whereas in Trinidad and Tobago they play on Bermuda style of grass," Ames said. "Golf is a worldwide event."

For more on the Stephen Ames Cup, go to: cjga.com



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Trinidad and Tobago's Monifa Sealy tries to coax her putt during Stephen Ames Cup at Stouffville's Granite Golf Club Thursday. For results, see page 11.

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CORRECTION NOTICE

The Council meeting schedule outlined on the Town's page in the Thursday August 16/07 Sun-Tribune was incorrect. It should have read:

- Tuesday September 4, 7 p.m. - Council in Committee meeting
- Tuesday September 18, 3 p.m. - Council Meeting
- Tuesday September 18, 7 p.m. Public hearing meeting, if required

All meetings are held in the Council chamber, 4th floor, 37 Sandiford Drive

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