

International games serve SDSS well

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA
Staff Writer

When Jamie Hewitt receives a telephone call from Rugby Ontario and it's spring, he has a good idea why.

Hewitt is asked annually if his Stouffville District Secondary School Spartans boys' rugby teams will host an international friendly.

As in other years, the Spartans head senior coach was more than willing to oblige this year.

The Spartans bantam and senior teams will take to the Stouffville District Secondary School pitch Sunday for games with Robert Clack School from Dagenham, England. The bantams will play the first game at 1 p.m. and seniors to follow.

While Hewitt has not seen the English school team play, he anticipates his charges will benefit from the experience.

Win or lose.

Especially since rugby in England is played at a far higher skill level than in Canada. It's almost the Canadian equivalent of hockey, he said.

"They will be better than us. But that's what can make us a better team," Hewitt said. "We want to play good teams to learn new things and share ideas. With rugby, we get more ideas from them than they do from us."

Hewitt says exhibition games his senior club played were instrumental in them winning back-to-back Ontario AA high school championships.

Just as important, Hewitt said the friendlies also serve as a tool for the players and coaches to forge new friendships with people they might not otherwise meet.

"It's definitely a good way for the kids to meet other kids from around the world. It's part of the rugby culture where you play hard and then have pizza and pop with the opposition afterwards," Hewitt said.

It also builds Hewitt's contact list, especially if



STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

Stouffville Secondary's Liam Mitro yells out to motivate himself up a hill near the finish of the boys' junior division race during the York Region high school cross-country championships at Boyd Conservation Area in Woodbridge Thursday.

he wants to take his teams overseas as they did last March break to England and Wales. This is something Hewitt would like to do every other year.

"Like last year when we hosted Brecon from Wales, they stayed at our houses and then when we went overseas last March break we played games against them," Hewitt said.

It's the fifth straight fall Stouffville has hosted an international game.

"This is almost an annual thing and our kids now know to expect it," he said.

Spartans run off with junior boys York Region cross-country title

The Spartans junior boys' cross-country team blazed a trail at the York Region Athletic Association championships after finishing first in the 6,000-metre event at Boyd Conservation Area in Woodbridge Thursday.

Liam Mitro was the top Spartans' runner after finishing fourth. Michael Bourgeois was fifth, Mitchell Price ninth and

Mitchell Browne 12th.

Among other Spartan runners who competed, Brittany Dunbar was 14th in the senior girls' 5,000m.

Kyle O'Brien finished 24th in the senior boys' 7,000m race while teammate Kohl McVicar was 30th.

In the midget girls' 3,000m event, Olivia Bolender was 36th.

For more on the cross-country championships, log on to: www.trackdatabase.com

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