

HIGH SCHOOLS: Rugby team moves to AAAA ranks

Spartans prove they can play with big boys

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The big question facing the Stouffville District Secondary School Spartans senior boys' rugby team entering this season was whether they could play at the AAAA level.

The Spartans will compete at the AAAA level due to an increase in school population this year after having been a AA entry in the past.

Taking to the McMaster University pitch to play in a tournament against some of the top AAAA level teams last week, the Spartans alleviated any doubts.

In fact, they reached the finals in their eight-team division and gave Lorne Park (Mississauga) a run for its money before surrendering a try on the last play of the game to lose 7-0.

"This definitely showed that we could play with AAAA-level teams," said Spartans head coach Jamie Hewitt. "In the past we've played against AAAA-level teams, but it would only be in tournaments. Now we'll be seeing them more and more since we're competing at that level."

"There's really not much difference. It shows we're ready."

The Spartans won their opening game over Bradford 22-5.

Brandon Paulino, Atique Wasim, Con-

nor McDonald and Curtis Crago scored for the Spartans. Jesse Lofthouse booted one convert.

Advancing to the semifinal, the Spartans trailed host Saltfleet for most of the game before Lofthouse scored a try on the final play of the match and booted a convert to propel Stouffville to a hard-fought 7-5 win.

Hewitt credited the play of their defence in enabling them to reach the final.

"It was very good," he said. "Our offence is just coming around."

The Spartans' solid defensive play stemmed largely from their recent March break tour to play friendlies against schools from England and Wales.

"It was huge," Hewitt said. "We were used to playing physical teams and the kids told (the Spartans coaching staff) that it wasn't as hard or physical (in the Saltfleet Tournament) as it was when we played in England."

"That tour definitely toughened us up." The Spartans were to have played an exhibition game yesterday in Cannington against Brock High School.

The first league game is slated for April 27 when the defending York Region Athletic Association champions play Markham at Bill Crothers Secondary School in Unionville at 2:30 p.m.

Stingers spike gold at first provincials

As a first-year volleyball team, the Stouffville Markham Stingers under-13 girls, did not play like they were assembled just this season.

Resembling a contingent that had been together for several years, the team of players from Stouffville, Markham and Uxbridge served, spiked and dug their way to the gold medal at last weekend's Ontario Volleyball Association championships in Waterloo.

The Stingers claimed the top prize after quickly disposing of Scarborough Titans Omicron 2-0 (25-16, 25-18) in the championship final.

Mike Lynch, who co-coaches the team with Nikki MacKinnon, felt his club's grit was a key component in their run to the title.

"I told them, 'you never know when you may get to that point again in volleyball and have a chance to win something that big so play your hardest and hold nothing back'. They certainly did that and more. They are an extremely close team and it showed this weekend."

The Stingers' biggest challenge came in the semifinals when they faced the Aurora Storm Bolts, who were co-ranked as the top team in the championships.

The Stingers prevailed 2-1 (25-17, 18-25, 15-11).

Team members included: Alexa Torrington, Alyssa Harding, Erin Lee, Jaime Fox, Katerina Dimov, Kelsey Fuchs, Lauryn Renzella, Monda Shokri, Rhyena Miller and Sarah Ali.

Morad drives to monthly karting award

A prominent karting website has named a Whitchurch-Stouffville resident driver of the month for March.

Daniel Morad, 19, earned the accolades from eKartingNews.com

At the Florida Winter Tour, Morad bested the largest DD2 field to clinch the championship and earn a return to the Rotax Grand Finals in La Conca, Italy in November.

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