

NHLers flock to train under 'Gary'

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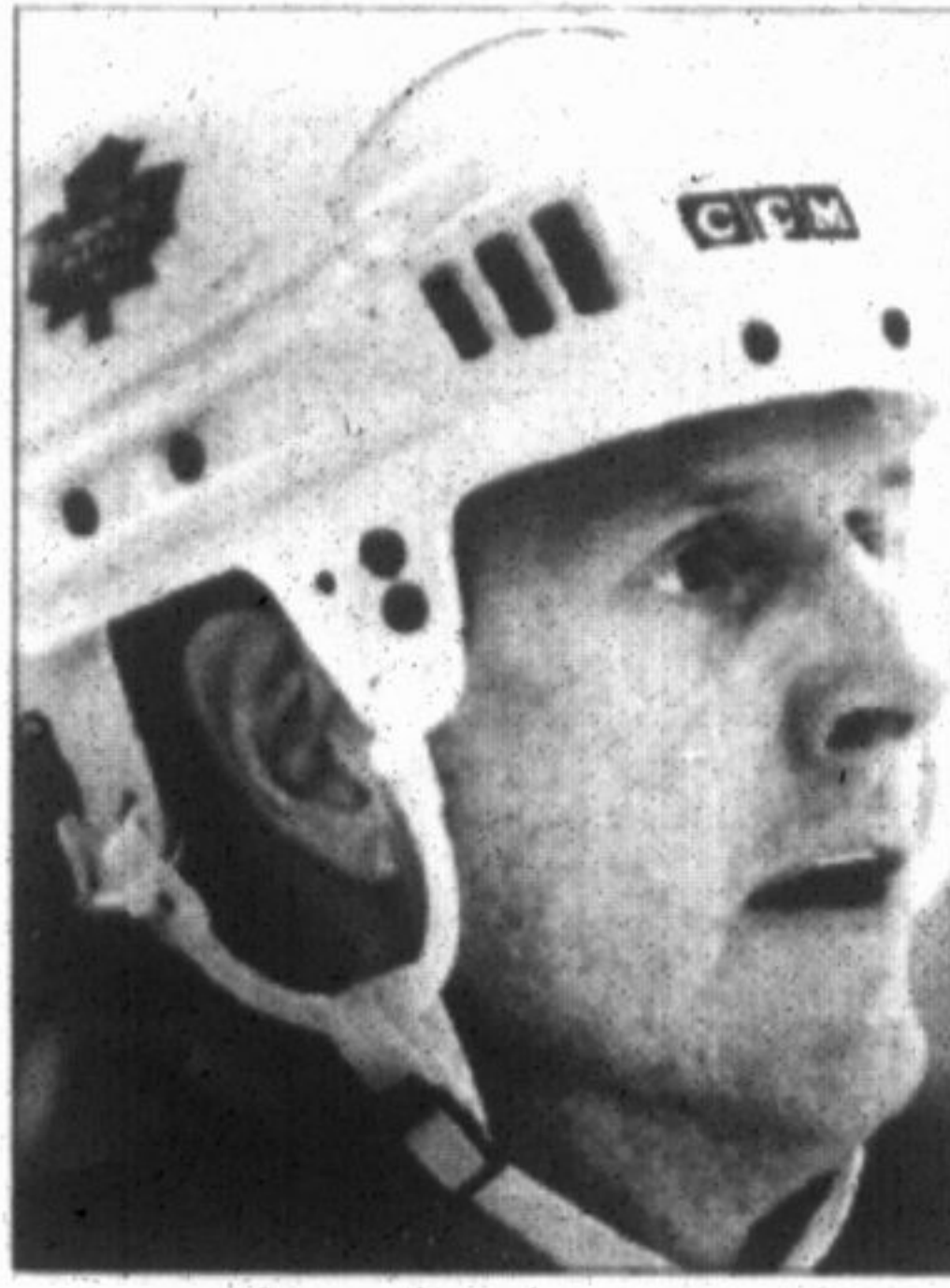
If you bring him in, they will come.

That's what Stouffville Spirit junior A hockey club co-owner Steve Roest is hoping will transpire after working out an agreement to have Gary Roberts, one of hockey's top high-performance fitness gurus, join him at his North York-based Fitness Institute.

So far, the Stouffville resident's decision to incorporate the Gary Roberts High Performance Training Program at his facility, which was Canada's first-ever Olympic High Performance Testing and Sports Medicine Centre that began in 1963, appears to be a good fit.

During the current offseason, a number of prominent National Hockey League players and those with aspirations of making it to the big time have worked with Roberts.

They include Tampa Bay Lightning forward and Markham native Steven Stamkos, Lightning forward and Queensville resident Steve Downie, Vancouver Canucks forward and Markham resident Cody Hodgson, Florida Panthers



GARY ROBERTS: Ex-Leaf joins forces with Stouffville's Steve Roest for Fitness Institute program.

forward and Markham resident Stephen Weiss, Carolina Hurricanes forward and Markham native Jeff Skinner and Phoenix Coyotes and former Stouffville Spirit forward Ethan Werek.

"It's great to have Gary on board with us," Roest said of the Whitby native who logged 21 seasons in the NHL including one in 1989 when he was a member of the Stanley Cup-champion Calgary Flames. "It's a great partner-

ship, he's a great guy and he has a great reputation."

Their initial discussions began two years ago.

But during this past season, the pair resumed their talks and finally made a decision to give it a go in February.

With Roberts on board, Roest noted he's there five days a week at his facility.

And during those days, he's totally committed by logging long hours.

In explaining what separates Roberts from other high-performance trainers who try to extol the virtues of what they do, Roest feels he brings the whole package and can back it up having played in the NHL until he was 43 years old.

There's not too many guys who can say they've played in the NHL until that age.

"He brings the whole training component including nutrition. He teaches guys to eat properly and he knows how hard to train them and he preaches about the proper time they need to rest. He understands it," said Roest, a Whitchurch-Stouffville resident.

"He's done it for a long time and he surrounds himself with

the right people.

"The players appreciate what he does. What he talks about works. At the end of the day it's about getting results and Gary has players come from all over."

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While Roberts has been working these days with a number of NHL and NHL-bound prospects during the offseason, Roest said they have plans to launch the same high performance training and nutritional programs for youth hockey teams from the ages of 10 to 17 on a year-round basis.

"All of our programs will be age specific," Roest said.

For further information on The Fitness Institute and Roberts' high-performance hockey program, log on to: www.fitnessinstitute.com

FLYERS

Inserts for Thursday, Aug. 11, 2011

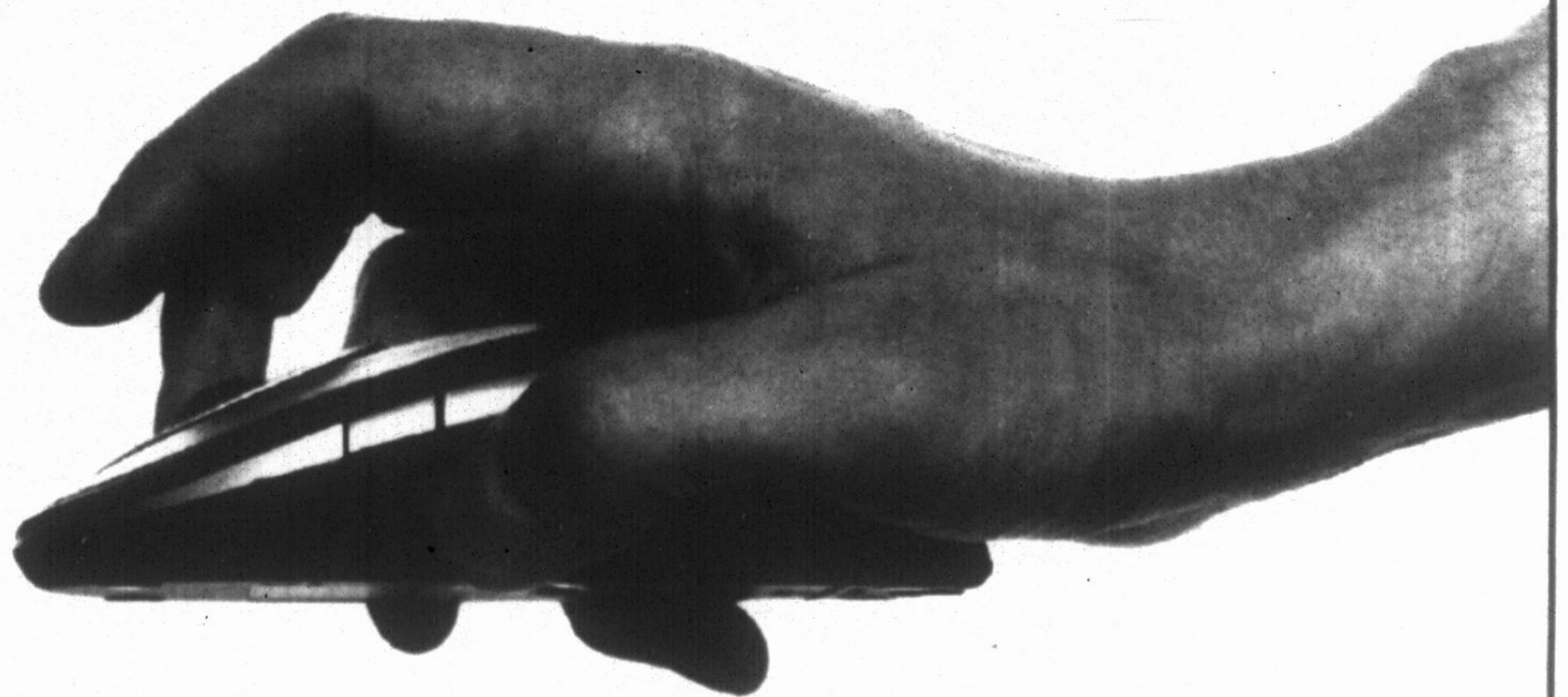
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