

# Touring rugby player hopes to suit up for Canada

BY MICHAEL HAYAKAWA  
mhayakawa@yrmg.com

Mikhaila Irving has been anxiously counting down the days before making a 10-day trip to the United Kingdom this week.

And with good reason.

While sightseeing will be part of the agenda for the 16-year-old Stouffville resident, she will also put her skills on the rugby pitch to the test as part of a Mississauga Blues Rugby Football Club Under-18 girls' contingent.

Starting today, Irving and the rest of her Mississauga Blues RFC cohorts will hold four practices, play games against Oakmeadows RFC in Bournemouth, Guildford RFC in London, St. Helen's RFC in Liverpool and Drybrook RFC in Gloucester — and do plenty of

tourist stuff.

Among the activities will be a visit to Twickenham to watch England play Italy in Six Nations action.

"I'm very excited to be going on this tour," Irving, a scrum half, said. "It's such an amazing opportunity to have. I've been counting down for 200 days and to have it so close just seems so unreal."

Irving said the opportunity to go overseas came about last summer when one of her Rugby Ontario teammates invited her to play with the Mississauga Blues in a seven-aside tournament during the fall.

Developing a good rapport with their coaches, Irving was eventually asked if she wanted to join the club on their upcoming tour.

It did not take Irving long to give

them an affirmative response.

Making Irving's journey even more remarkable is the amount of time she's laboured in the sport.

Just two seasons to be precise.

While excelling in other sports including ringette during the winter months, Irving recalled her introduction to rugby was born through the opportunity to play at Bill Crothers Secondary School when she was in Grade 9.

## GRADE 10 STUDENT

Currently in Grade 10, Irving revealed her interest in the game continued to develop through the encouragement of a family friend, Brian Chatland.

"Once he heard I was going to play, he immediately gave me a rugby ball to start passing with. He's a huge supporter of rugby and

has refereed and coached," Irving said of the Stouffville resident, who also coaches at St. Brother Andre Catholic High School in Markham.

Looking ahead at the upcoming games her club will play, Irving anticipated the friendlies scheduled won't be easy.

At the same time though, it will provide another learning curve in her ascent up the competitive rank and file with the hope of one day playing for Canada.

"All I've heard is that they have big teams over there, so I can't wait to see how our small stature team compares to theirs," she said. "I know this tour will be beneficial development wise, I have amazing coaches and many talented players to learn from."

"Having exposure to coaches in

the United Kingdom as well will give me a new perspective about the game and will hopefully further my development. One day I hope to play for Canada, but I'm still young and have plenty of time to prepare for the future."

Expanding her competitive horizons by playing with the Aurora Barbarians last season, Irving intends to continue playing the game at the club level this season with the Markham Irish Canadian Rugby Football Club.

At the same time, she hopes her upcoming overseas tour will be the first of many to follow down the road while playing a game for which she's developed a passion.

"I sure hope to go on more tours, but I'm grateful to have the chance to go on this one," she said.

# Stouffville Churches Welcome You

## STOUFFVILLE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Corner of Main St. & Stouffer St.  
905-640-2561

**Sunday Worship Service**  
11:00 a.m.

**Soup & Sandwich Lunch**  
12:30 noon

Come, be refreshed.  
Have your faith renewed.

www.stouffvillechristianchurch.ca



Stouffville Rd. at Kennedy Rd.  
905-887-5651

**Sunday, March 10th**  
10:00am

Celebration Service  
Ed Fontaine

www.springvale.org

## WELCOME TO ST. JAMES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

6432 Main St., Stouffville  
Phone: 905.640.3151  
Wheelchair accessible

**Sunday, March 10**  
Service of Worship  
10 a.m.

**Tuesday, March 12**  
A pot-luck luncheon will be hosted by St. James Youth at 12 noon.

A movie 'The Brave' will be shown.

The congregation is invited.

*A friendly family church*

Stouffville  
Pentecostal Church  
6853 Main St., Stouffville  
905.640.5696

Sunday Service @ 10 am  
Sunday School  
Kids Ages 2 - 12 years of age

Lead Pastor: Jeff Laird  
Children's Pastor: Lori Attack  
Youth Pastor: Ian Harley  
Counselor: Bonnie Borchardt  
www.spfamily.ca

Tuesday's @ 6:45pm - 8:15pm  
Jr. High - Grades 6 - 8

Wednesday's @ 7:00pm - 8:15pm  
Kids Club - SK - Grade 5

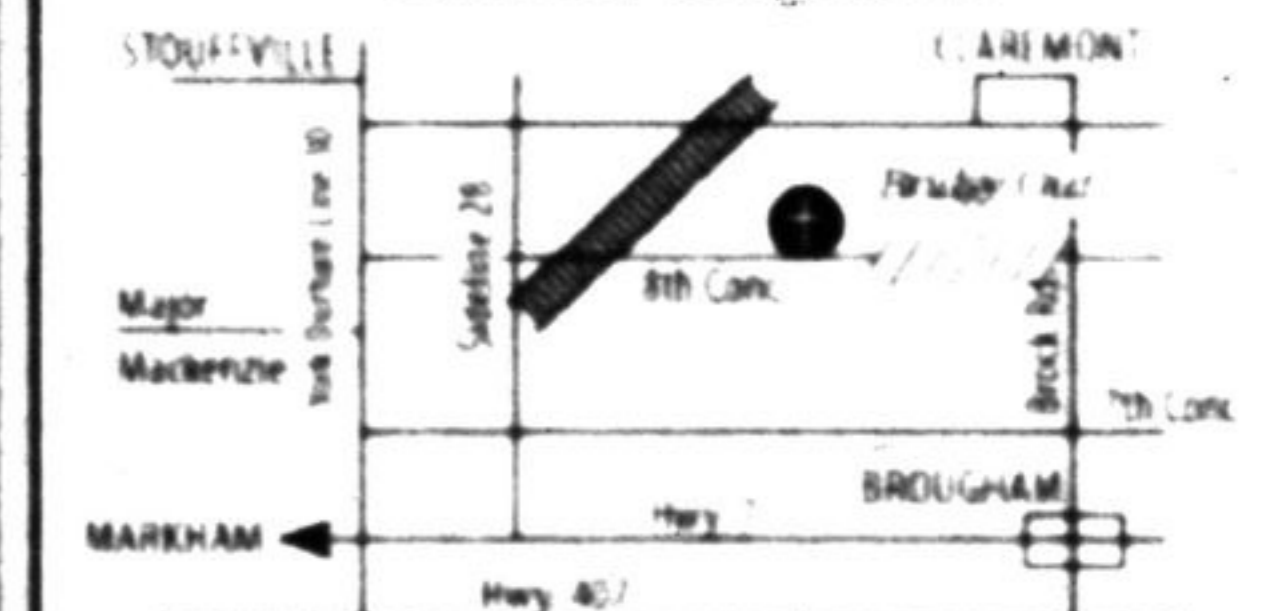
Friday's @ 7:00pm - 10pm  
Sr. High - Grades 9 - 12

Everyone Welcome!

## Stouffville Christian Fellowship

A Church in a Beautiful Countryside  
Pastor Walter Robbins

**Sunday Service**  
10:30am  
Lunch to follow



860 Conc. 8, Claremont  
905-649-2812



**Sunday Service at 10:00 am**

www.in2one.ca  
416-898-4774

19 on the Park  
19 Civic Avenue, Stouffville  
Lead Pastor: Graham Clinton

inviting, relational, open

SUNDAY WORSHIP  
COME AS YOU ARE!

## Christ Church Stouffville

Anglican Church of Canada  
254 Sunset Blvd., 905-640-1461  
www.stouffvilleanglican.ca

**Sunday March 10th**  
4th Sunday in Lent  
8:00 am & 10:00 am

Eucharist  
Church School & Nursery  
at 10:00 am

**Wednesday March 20**  
Lenten Dinner at 5:30

**ALL WELCOME!  
COME & SEE!**

## BLOOMINGTON GOSPEL CHURCH

13660 Ninth Line N.  
(905) 642-4414  
Rev. Peter Pallant

**Sunday, March 10**

9:30 a.m.  
Sunday School  
11:00 a.m.  
Worship Service  
6:30 p.m.  
Evening Service

**Everyone Welcome!**

恩泉浸信會  
Stouffville Grace Baptist Church

**SUNDAY WORSHIP 9:45AM**  
Chinese/English/Children Service  
(中/英文及兒童崇拜)

@ Oscar Peterson Public School  
850 Hoover Park Dr., Stouffville

CHURCH OFFICE (教會辦事處)  
(647) 547-3618  
32 Jamesway Cres., Stouffville  
stouffvillebranch@rhcbc.org  
www.stouffville-gbc.org

## Stouffville United Church

Rev. Nancy Waterman

34 Church St. N. • 905-640-1163

info@stouffvilleuc.ca

**Lent 4**  
**Sunday, March 10th**  
10:30am Worship Service  
It Happened on a Tuesday  
An off the record conversation  
between Jesus & Peter

**Wednesday, March 13th**  
9:30 am  
Prayer Meeting

www.stouffvilleuc.ca

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