

SPORTS: First York title since 2002

Girls' rugby champions all about development

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The Stouffville District Secondary School Spartans can add another York Region Athletic Association rugby championship trophy to their display case.

But it won't come from the Spartans senior, junior or bantam boys' teams.

Rather, it will come courtesy of the Spartans girls, who tackled the YRAA tier two title with a dramatic 15-10 overtime win over the St. Augustine Titans (Markham) in Wednesday's finale at Keswick High School.

Trailing 10-5 with around four minutes remaining in regulation time, the Spartans mounted a late attack and got a try from Jaime Risi with around one minute left to tie the game and set the stage for the dramatic finish.

Stormm Cerelli scored the Spartans' first try that put them up 5-0 at the half.

For the Spartans, the title won was their first since the 2002 campaign.

"It was a great day, a lot of fun," said Spartans' coach Tara LaBar.

"It wasn't just one or two players that carried the team," she said. "We just played great as a team where everyone executed what they had to do. Everyone worked hard in their positions."

Entering the season with an enthusiastic 45-player roster, LaBar felt the team had the potential to exhibit progress after winning just one league game a year ago.

Helping to nurture that potential is the presence of a solid coaching staff that also includes Janice Monk, her husband Jim, who coaches the Markham Irish Canadian Rugby Club women and girls' entries and Natalie Bendavid, a former national team player.

"We had a young team last year and we're young again this year with just four Grade 12s and the majority in Grades nine and 10. We have a crew that's competitive and one that's developing," said LaBar.

With the club still relatively young, LaBar is excited about the future prospects of the team and hinted they might make a move to tier one next season.

Bantam boys in Barbarian Cup

The Spartans bantam boys' rugby team will take to the Fletcher's Field pitch in Markham to take part in the Barbarian Cup Sunday.

Competing in the midget boys' division, the Spartans will face Streetsville Secondary School at 9 a.m. followed by a game against Brantford Collegiate at 11:15 a.m. and Waterloo Collegiate at 2 p.m.



Stouffville's Stormm Cerelli carries the ball during the York Region tier 2 final in Keswick Wednesday.

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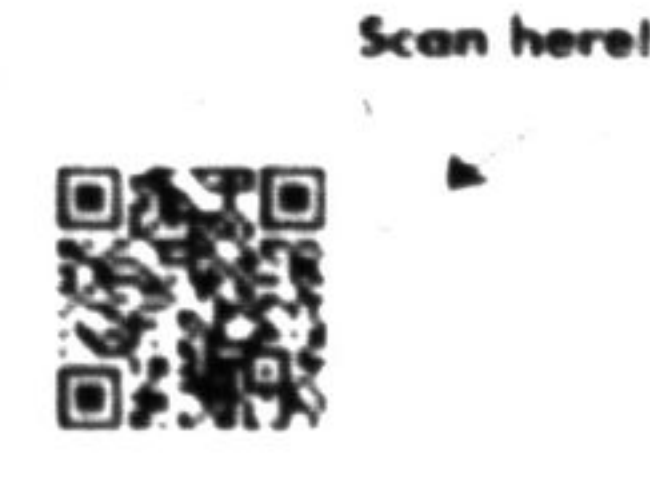
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