

Town's top sport always there for minor hockey

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In the 32 years Andy Cartwright has resided in Whitchurch-Stouffville, he's witnessed a number of people receive the Whitchurch-Stouffville's Sports Person of the Year award.

But when this year's citation is handed out, he won't have to listen to anyone making an acceptance speech.

Rather, the 54-year-old Cartwright will be making that speech after being chosen as this year's recipient.

Scheduled to receive the award during the opening of the Strawberry Festival June 28, the long-time Whitchurch-Stouffville Minor Hockey Association volunteer was humbled to become a part of that select group.

"There are so many people that donate time to various organizations and there's a lot of volunteers in Stouffville who could be acknowledged," he said.

Having received other awards during his time with the association, Cartwright said to be named Sports Person of the Year has added significance since it entails Whitchurch-Stouffville rather than from a specific organization or association.

"This is a community award and the candidates span several sports and activities. As such this is quite special. I've seen a lot of wonderful people receive this in my 32 years in Stouffville. To be considered in their company is quite an honour."

Growing up in North York before getting married and moving to Stouffville in 1982, he's the father of Shannon, Katelyn and Matthew.

His indoctrination to the association did not begin until 1991 when Matthew, then a four-year-old, enrolled to play.

Making his coaching debut in 1975 when he was just 17 while residing in North York and continu-

ing in that post until 1982, Cartwright returned behind the bench with the association's house league division when Matthew began to play.

While coaching at the house league level the following year, Cartwright took on added responsibilities with the association when he was nominated to convene the novice house league division.

He continued his ascent up the association ladder when he was nominated to the board in 1993 while at the same time, coached the tyke selects.

Serving on the association's board for 10 years, Cartwright held the position as president for the final six.

Cartwright said being a convenor and board member would not have been possible were it not for the support and encouragement he received from Matt Hawkins.

"Matt asked me to convene the novice division in 1992 and he also nominated me to the board in 1993," Cartwright said.

ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT

Even when Cartwright was on the association's executive board, he found the time to coach and made his debut at the rep level in 1994.

Even when his son Matthew retired from playing, he continued to coach rep hockey right up until this past season.

The most recent was the Clippers juvenile team that played host to the Ontario Hockey Federation AAA championships and advanced to the semifinal.

Since joining the association, Cartwright said there were a number of highlights he was proud to be a part of.

From an individual perspective, coaching a Clippers novice team in 1996 to his first Ontario Minor Hockey Association championship title was special.

While serving on the association's executive, though, there's far



STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

Andy Cartwright has been named the 2013 Whitchurch-Stouffville Sports Person of the Year.

more satisfying moments.

Among those, Cartwright noted, was in helping the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville secure a second rink.

Serving as president when the association celebrated its 50th anniversary, Cartwright was instrumental in overseeing the festive occasion was recognized through a number of different events that took place that year.

Cartwright also fuelled the start of a select hockey program in the association and in reviving juvenile hockey after an absence of several years.

This past season, he played a key role in helping Whitchurch-Stouffville serve as hosts for the OHF AAA juvenile championships.

Don Easter, current association president, felt Cartwright's selection was well deserved.

"Given his long service to minor hockey in Stouffville, not to mention his many accomplishments, I was actually quite surprised to learn he had not received this honour previously," he said.

Having worked closely with Cartwright in coaching a bantam-aged rep team no one else was willing to take on, Easter felt his biggest attribute was an unwavering loyalty to the organization.

Cartwright possesses an uncanny ability to take the bull by the horns, Easter said.

One such example was in his undaunting ability to rejuvenate programs such as the juvenile rep team after it was absent for a few years.

"I'm not sure how many people remember, but Andy stepped up to take on the role of Whitchurch-Stouffville Minor Hockey Association president at a time when the organization was going through some tough times and no one else seemed prepared to take on the challenge of turning things around.

"More recently he has assumed a leadership role in rebuilding juvenile hockey programs not only here in Stouffville but throughout York-Simcoe.

"Without his efforts a lot of 17- to 20-year-old hockey players might not have an opportunity to continue playing."

Easter was also quick to point out what Cartwright has accomplished was done on his own free time and with no financial gain.

He's even carried this out after his youngsters had finished playing minor hockey.

All of this has been accomplished through a low-key approach.

"In my mind Andy typifies what volunteerism is all about. He has willingly stepped up to give his time to fill a need with no expectation of personal gain.

"He has continued to make a significant contribution to minor hockey long after his kids ceased to be involved. The roles he has taken on have been important, but not necessarily high profile ones. In a quiet and unassuming way he simply set about getting the job done - not much flash, but always effective."

STAYED INVOLVED

Employed by PowerStream where he's a meter department manager, Cartwright elected to retire from coaching the Clippers juveniles upon completion of this year's OHF championships.

However, he won't be too far removed from the minor hockey scene.

In fact, Cartwright has offered to assist in a transition phase with incoming Clippers juvenile coach Angelo Varsamis.

"I will act as a consultant to the new coach and I'm always available to the Whitchurch-Stouffville Minor Hockey Association for anything they might need," he said.

Spoken like a real trooper.