

# Rugby player proud to represent Stouffville at nationals

BY MICHAEL HAYAKAWA  
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When Danny Shields entered Stouffville District Secondary School as a Grade 9 student last year he heard a lot about the reputation of the Spartans' rugby program and wanted to be a part of it.

Shields did just that when he began to learn the game's rudiments as a member of the Spartans bantam boys' team.

Those lessons appeared to have paid off for Shields this summer.

*'When you talk to him, he looks you in the eyes and you know he is listening to every word you tell him — his play shows it.'*

Especially when he was among 25 players chosen to be on the provincial under-15 travelling team that will go to British Columbia to take part in the upcoming under-16 nationals from Aug. 7 to 11.

For Shields, who plays the lock position, being named to the pro-

vincial team marked the first time he's earned such an honour.

"I'm very happy to be a part of the under-15 team," he said. "I feel it's an honour to be chosen to the team travelling to British Columbia and I'm excited to be competing at the nationals."

To make the team, Shields attended the initial tryouts over the Canada Day weekend.

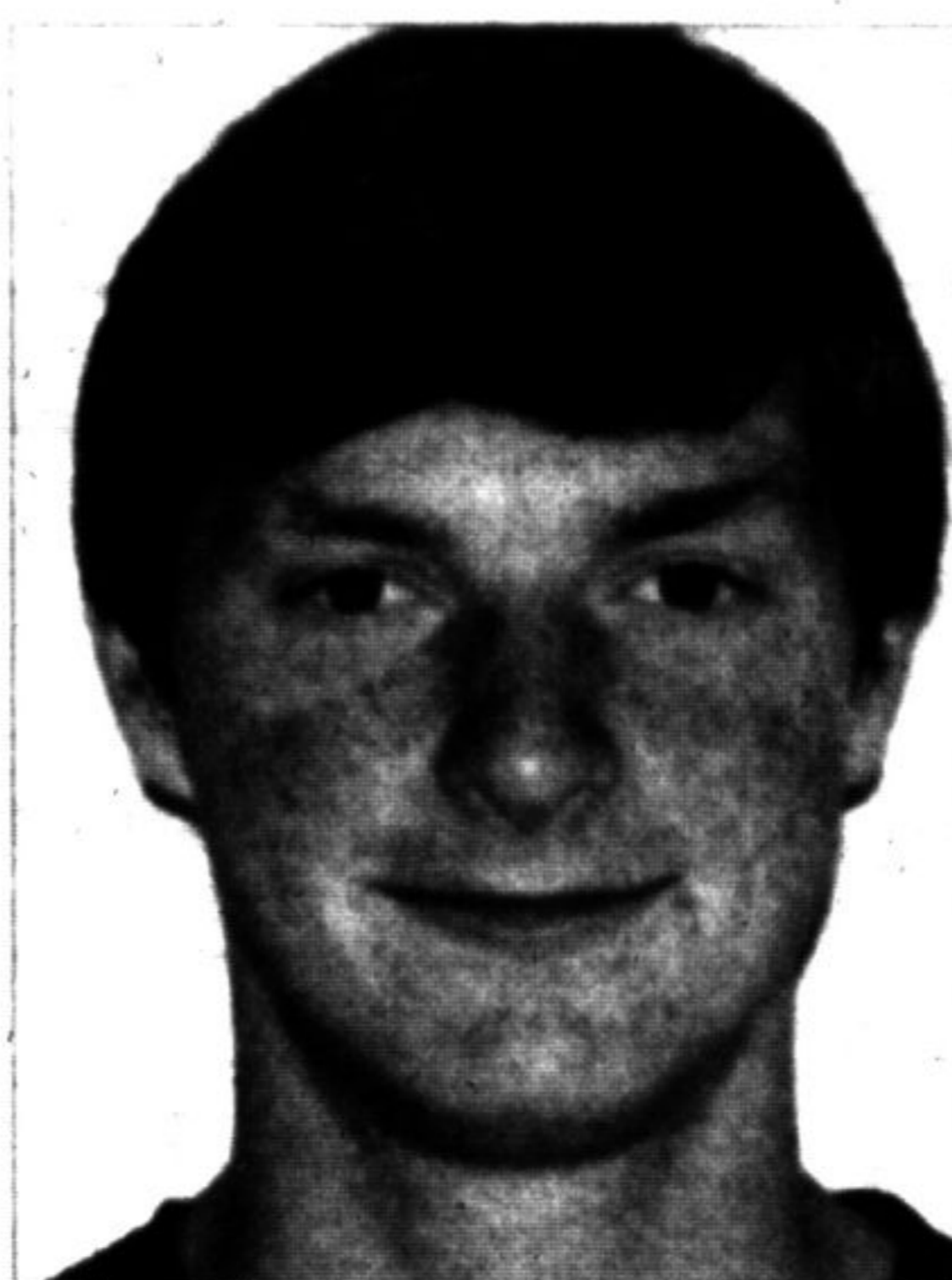
During those auditions, Shields entered it with an open mind since it represented the first time he was involved in such a process with the provincial team.

But after two rounds of roster cuts, the most recent of which was last week, he was among the select group of 25.

"I just wanted to do my best and I knew the decision (to make the final roster) was out of my hands," he said.

While Shields was elated to make the team, Matt Macaulay, his coach while playing during the summer months with the Markham Irish Canadian Rugby Football Club, wasn't the least bit surprised.

Especially since Macaulay described Shields as a player who possesses a great passion for the game and has the ability to adapt



**DANNY SHIELDS:** Ontario U15 player learned how to play rugby at Stouffville Secondary.

quickly to situations.

"Danny is a fast, strong, quick learner and looks like he loves the game," he said. "When you talk to him, he looks you in the eyes and you know he is listening to every word you tell him — his play shows it. Danny has got the understanding of this game and will grow into a great player."

In explaining what success he's

had in such a short period of time while playing the game, Shields was quick to credit his Stouffville Secondary coaches, Glenn Tarver and Steve Crummey.

Not to mention the great rugby tradition built at his high school.

"Stouffville District Secondary School has a good rugby program and great coaches like Mr. Tarver and Mr. Crummey who have helped me a long the way," he said.

While elated to be a part of the provincial team and at SDSS, Shields hasn't looked too far down the road as to how far he wants to take his career on the pitch.

For now, he just wants to continue to build on the foundation he's laid as a player.

"Right now, I just want to keep playing the game," he said.

While Shields was chosen to be a part of the travelling provincial team, one of his Stouffville District Secondary School and Markham Irish Canadian Rugby Football Club teammates in Haydn Messner, made the under-15 provincial squad's 40-member long list before the final travel roster was chosen.

Messner played the wing position.

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