

Two titles for OUA golf champ

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For many golfers, playing under the influence of wind and rain is not conducive to producing good results.

Gajan Sivabalasingham seems to thrive playing under inclement conditions.

With wind and rain being prevalent during the Ontario University Athletic championships at the Oshawa Golf and Country Club Monday and Tuesday, the 20-year-old Ballantrae resident and fourth-year member of the University of Waterloo men's team did not let those elements interfere with his game. He proceeded to capture the individual title and help his contingent of Dylan Cave, Brandon Pearce, Daniel Wilson and David French claim the team championship.

During the gruelling 36-hole competition, Sivabalasingham carded rounds of 70 and 74 to finish at even par.

This was two strokes better than Harris Bundy of the University of Western Ontario, Brett Mitchell of Brock and Ryan Tsang of Toronto, who were all tied in second place at two-over 146.

In the team event, Waterloo finished at 15-over at 591, four strokes better than the second-place Ottawa.

"It sure feels pretty good," Sivabalasingham said. "This (winning the OUA title) was something that I wanted to do for a couple of years and it was nice that our team played well, too. It made it that much better."

Sivabalasingham said the key for him was to stay warm and dry.

"I tend to play better when the weather is bad," he said. "I think it goes back to the days when I was younger and when I played with my dad we played a lot when the weather was cold and wet."

While pleased with his opening round 70 in which he was a co-leader, Sivabalasingham felt his lead was in jeopardy after he concluded with a 74 Tuesday.

"I really didn't know if my score would be good enough to win," he said. "I left a lot of shots out there on Tuesday and there's so many good players. I thought for sure someone would have shot under par. But everything worked out."

Sporting a playing resume that included winning a junior boys' provincial championship in 2012, the Ontario Order of Merit that same year, the provincial bantam boys' title in 2007 and numerous Canadian Junior Golf Association titles during his youth, Sivabalasingham felt his latest accomplishment was extra special.

"This tournament has a lot of history behind it. There's a lot of good names on the trophy," the math and business major said.

The last time the University of Waterloo won the OUA team title was in 2011. Sivabalasingham was on that team.

Waterloo gained automatic entry into the Canadian Interuniversity Sport championships to be held next spring in Guelph.

JR. A NOTEBOOK

Spirit wheeling, dealing before comeback tie

LAST WEEK: Saturday: Stouffville Spirit 6 vs. Newmarket Hurricanes 6. Spirit record: 6-8-1-13, fifth place in North Division.

COMING UP: Friday at Burlington Cougars, 7:30 p.m. Saturday: vs. St. Michael's Buzzers at Stouffville Arena, 7:30 p.m.

GAME NOTES: The Stouffville Spirit took a roller coaster ride in their Ontario Junior Hockey league contest against the visiting and archrival Newmarket Hurricanes Saturday. In the end though, the ups and downs experienced by the Spirit balanced out after they battled the Hurricanes to a 6-6 overtime tie.

The Spirit's journey began with a quick downward spiral when they trailed 5-1 through the opening 20 minutes. Not helping matters for the Spirit were some untimely penalties they took as the Hurricanes' power play took advantage and delivered the game's first three goals from the sticks of Sam Hu, Jacob Piltzmaker and Cameron Nicoll. After the Hurricanes added an even strength marker from Ryan Reynolds, their penalty-killing unit made a contribution when Ryan Shaw scored to give them what appeared to be a commanding 5-0 lead.

But the Spirit capitalized on a power play opportunity when Nick Thomakos scored with just 10 seconds remaining in the period to cut their deficit. Just 93 seconds into the second period, the Hurricanes restored their five-goal margin on a goal by Nik Coric. Cue the comeback. Buoyed by goals from Robert Clark, Joseph Deveny and Tyson Bruce, the Spirit got back into the game and cut the Hurricanes' lead to 6-4 when the two clubs went into the second intermission. Riding the emotional wave, the Spirit rallied to tie the game with goals from Deveny and Brodie Tutton just past the midway mark to set the stage for their two scoreless overtime sessions.

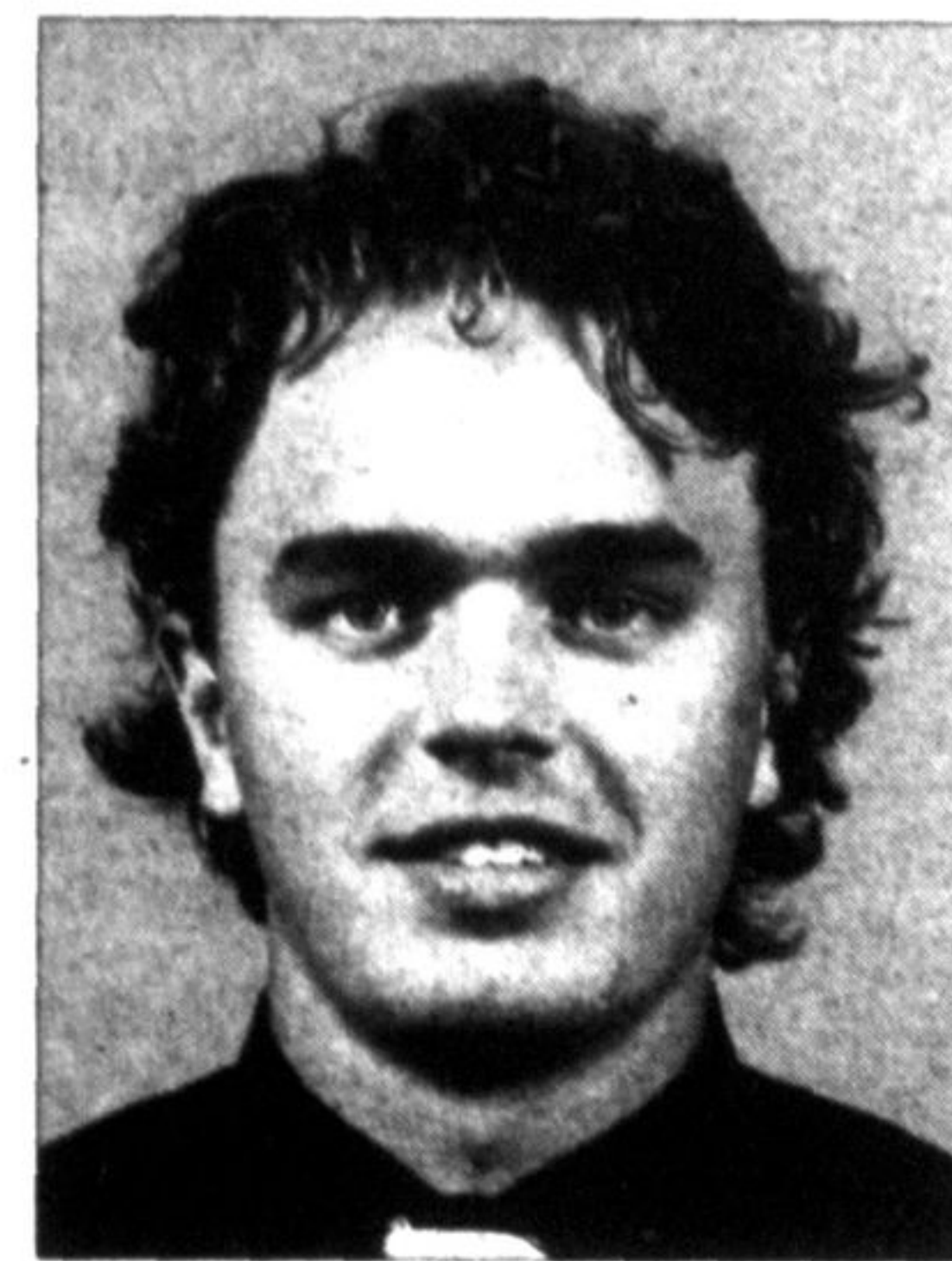
The Hurricanes directed 48 shots on the Spirit, including 21 in the opening period of which Connor McCollum handed nine of 13 shots before giving way to Aaron Taylor, who finished the game. The Spirit directed 42 shots on Hurricanes' netminder Connor Ryckman.

INSIDER: Brad Barton handled the Spirit's head coaching duties as Jeff Perrin was away Saturday due to a personal matter.

In an effort to jumpstart the club, Spirit director of player personnel Frank Robinson pulled the trigger and made a couple of roster moves prior to Saturday's game. One transaction saw the Spirit trade defenceman Adam Burnett, 18, to Milton for a player development fee. Logging ice time in 12 games with the Spirit this season, the six-foot, three-inch, 200-pound rearguard had five assists in 12 games. Prior to this season, Burnett played with the Hamilton Red Wings and Burlington Cougars last year.

Also sent packing was defenceman Kyler Challis, who was sent to the Pickering Panthers for 20-year-old defenceman Michael Giacometti. A five-foot, nine-inch, 160-pound-Mississauga resident, Giacometti had four goals and two assists in 13 games with the Panthers. A Whitby native, the 18-year-old Challis had one goal and five assists in 13 games while with the Spirit.

The Spirit also sent home recently acquired 19-year-old forward Zach Kercz, who is serving a four-game suspension. Robinson is currently working on trading Kercz, who began the season with the Trenton Golden Hawks and had one goal and one assist in four games and collecting one assist in four games while with the Spirit. On the injury front, forward James Mense-Dietrich missed Saturday's game with an upper body injury which may take a week or two to heal. Forward Spencer Roberts was



BRODIE TUTTON: Veteran has four-point night in emotional tie with Newmarket Hurricanes.

also a scratch with a lower body injury. The Spirit expect the nephew of former NHL player Gary Roberts back for Friday's road tilt against the Burlington Cougars. Nathan Hudgin started skating on Friday but is still around two weeks or so from returning.

Former Spirit forward Drake Caggiola earned a pair of assists in the University of North Dakota's 7-2 road win over Colorado College Saturday. Stouffville resident and former Spirit forward Chris Porter notched his first goal of the season, a power play effort, in American International College's 3-2 loss to Holy Cross Saturday.

GENERALLY SPEAKING: "We needed a confident puck-moving defenceman and Pickering wanted some grit on the back end so it should be a good trade for all," Robinson said in making the trade for Giacometti, who upon finding out he was going to Stouffville a few hours before the game, joined the club for their game against Newmarket.

"It would be nice to start a game strong," said Tutton, who added three assists in Saturday's tilt against Newmarket. "It all starts in the warmups and then having strong shifts early. It's not about scoring first but getting a few hits early and getting into the game."

Reflecting on their comeback to salvage one point in the standings, Tutton was quick to credit the enthusiasm exhibited by those in attendance at the Stouffville Arena in giving the club an adrenalin rush.

"It was exciting to see the crowd get into it," he said of his first double overtime game. "We fed off it. It would have been nice to (still) have the shootout. It's hard to tie a game like that."

In looking ahead to their next two outings against Burlington and St. Michael's, two teams Perrin described as being up and down so far this season, Perrin said his club cannot afford to dig themselves into a deep hole as they did against Newmarket.

"Burlington is a young team and they've been up and down. It's important that we have to get off to a good start in their building."

"St. Mike's are a tough team for us to play. They have played well lately and they're pretty skilled up front. Even when we played them earlier on we got off to a quick start and will have to do that again."

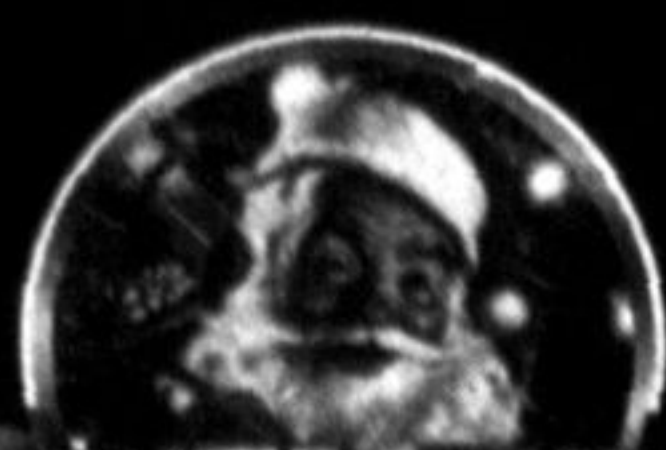
"Hopefully we can string a few wins together."

- Michael Hayakawa

*Sometimes a small thing
you do can mean everything
in another person's life*

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