

# Long-awaited start to golf season

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Mother Nature sure likes to be a tease.

What had the makings of an early spring with Whitchurch-Stouffville dodging any major snowstorms as compared with a year ago, it sure looked like golfers would get an early start to the local season.

But those wishes were short-lived when Old Man Winter returned in late March and early April, dumping more snow and blowing in more cold air.

It seems the worst is over and golfers can finally celebrate as local public courses are opening.

That includes Ballantrae Golf Club, which welcomed players Friday.

"Ideally, it would have been nice to open earlier," said John McLellan, Ballantrae Golf Club general manager. "But in April you'll always get some snow and that's what we got."

Citing Ballantrae's opening this year is five days later than last year, McLellan noted their 18-hole track measuring 6,659 yards from the back tees is in

good playing condition.

That in large part was due to the lack of snow and milder temperatures this winter.

The only thing they need to enhance their fairways and greens, he said, is plenty of sunshine and warmer temperatures.

"There's no winter damage," he reported. "Things are perfect. We just need to get going. Everything is good."

"We're excited to start a new season."

South on Hwy. 48, the Maples of Ballantrae Golf Club is on hold.

Due to its location on the Oak Ridges Moraine, they intend to open their 18-hole course Friday (April 22), said Roy Chan, head professional.

That, he said, is about the norm and close to last year's opening on April 25.

For a while in early March, Chan acknowledged they entertained thoughts of opening earlier than usual.

But in looking at the long range forecast, they elected to play it safe.

Turns out that was a wise decision.

"Right now the course is too wet. We want to give the course more time to dry up," he said.

"The course is in great shape," he said.

One change that did take place though, was in ownership.

However, Chan was quick to note while there are new owners, the golf management group and course will operate in the same manner as in the past.

At Bushwood Golf Club, their scheduled first tee off time was Saturday at 8 a.m., said club owner Mary Evelyn.

In electing to open last weekend, she noted they looked at the long-range weekly forecast as their course was in the throes of drying up after the snow, rain and cold weather that invaded the area during the last couple of weeks.

"It has been a very frustrating spring," she said.

Like other local courses, she noted their 18-hole, par 72 championship course measuring some 6,500 yards took any punches Old Man Winter tried to throw at it.

"The course looks great and it wintered very well," she said.

# Long-time hockey buddies share Steve Wright Award

BY MICHAEL HAYAKAWA  
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Don Shaw and Peter Hughes have been good friends for a long time.

As a part of their friendship, the pair played minor hockey together while growing up in Newmarket.

Since hanging up the blades as players, the pair of 47 year olds have remained in the game as coaches and turned to teaching those still nurturing their on-ice talents.

The duo joined the Whitchurch-Stouffville Minor Hockey Association five years ago and their efforts haven't gone unnoticed.

Shaw and Hughes received this year's Steve Wright Award, which recognizes a coach, assistant coach, trainer or manager who has made a significant contribution to minor hockey in Stouffville.

"It's a nice surprise to have been nominated for an award that recognizes someone for their volunteer work," said Shaw, who served as head coach of the Clippers minor bantam AE head coach.

"It's a complete honour," added Hughes.

In directing their club to an overall record of 26-15-3 this past season, Shaw and Hughes acknowledged the award



Peter Hughes (left) and Don Shaw.

given to them during the association's annual general meeting Wednesday was something they weren't expecting.

"To be honest, it was a total shock when I received a phone call telling me we had won the award," said Shaw, who immediately relayed the good tidings to Hughes.

Having been a minor hockey coach for 17 years, the award represents a highlight in their hockey careers, Shaw said.

"To win this award is definitely rewarding," Hughes said.

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