This page was exported from - The Auroran
Export date: Fri Mar 29 15:21:31 2024 / +0000 GMT

Barbarians gear up for 2014 season, urging youth to "TRY" rugby



By Jeff Doner

The Aurora Barbarians held their second annual ?Try? Rugby Day, inviting junior and minor players to come out and try the sport for free at St. Maximilian Kolbe CHS on Saturday.

Kids of all ages came out with their parents and braved the chilly, drizzling spring weather to see firsthand what rugby has to offer. Barbs past president John Reich said the club was thrilled with the turnout.

?It's great to see the community supporting us and wonderful to see so many parents willing to bring their kids out to try something new,? he said. ?Of the about 50 or so kids that were there, I'd say about 30 of them were absolute newbies to the game, so that's wonderful to see.?

Interactive games and sessions with coaches were set up for the youngsters and parents were given the opportunity to speak with coaches, trainers and veteran players. The club also served up lunch and had a booth with some swag and information.

Sandy Townsend, director of junior men's rugby with the Barbs and one of the event organizers, said the event was created to give kids the opportunity to try out rugby, when they otherwise might not ever be exposed to it.

?A lot of the kids we had out today have never seen the game on TV, don't have parents who play it, and don't even have it at their school, so we're delighted that they find out about it somewhere. And I have to say that I was really impressed with the number of girls who were out today.?

Townsend explained that youth seem to be drawn to the sport because of it's physicality and the fact that it truly allows anybody to play and participate.

For girls, Townsend said it's one of the rare contact sports where girls play by the same rules as the boys.

The junior and minor seasons will start up at the end of May and run through to August. Registration is still open, so for more information, visit www.aurorabarbarians.com

Senior men's and women's teams ready to take another run at championships

The 2014 season has been slow to start, but the senior men's and women's rugby teams are finally gearing up for the regular season.

?It's slow, but steady,? said Reich of pre-season progress. ?The senior men and women have been out through the month of April, but as you can imagine, we've even had snow at least two nights in early April, so with no warmth and all it's been hard to get the players enthused. However, we're definitely excited to get things going again.?

The senior men finished last season in second place behind the Toronto Scottish and will be looking to improve. However, this season the club will feature plenty of new faces as many veteran players are moving on, opening some valuable spaces for some young homegrown talent.

?I think as far as both the men and the women are concerned, we're going to have a significant turnover in players,? Reich said. ?Last year's senior men's team was kind of the last hurrah for a group of guys that have been in the first team lineup probably for the last eight or nine years, but we were fortunate enough to win the U18 championship, so I see seven or eight of those recently graduated juniors to step up into starting roles with the senior men.

?If we can maintain that right balance of youth and enthusiasm, with a few of the veterans sticking around, and I know they will, I think we'll be competitive and with any luck, maybe top four.?

As for the women, they'll have some more familiar faces, but are poised to once again be one of the teams to beat. The women have won the Ontario Women's League two years in a row.

Both senior women's and men's teams will be kicking off their season this weekend.