

Aurora Cup showcases national and international talent



By Jake Courtepatte

The sun was shining and the competition was heated up this weekend when over 100 soccer teams from across Ontario, and the world, took to the pitches of Aurora for the Aurora Youth Soccer Club's (AYSC) annual Aurora Cup.

Boasting competition in groups ranging from ages 8 ? 17, the tournament gives the organization an opportunity to ?offer first class fields and excellent facilities, providing keen competition for the participating teams,? according to Andres Torres, Social Media and Events Coordinator for the AYSC.

The U16/17 divisions offered some international flavour, with representatives from Husqvarna, Sweden fielding both a men's and women's side. A trip to Toronto and a tour of the Toronto FC training grounds were capped off by a gold medal win for the men, who cruised past the Aurora U16s and U17s, Kingston, and Mt. Hamilton to capture the Aurora Cup.

The hosts were the victors in two of the six competitive categories, thanks to the U14 boys and U16 girls squads. Last year's York Region Soccer League champion, the 2002 Boys Stingers, moved past the Stouffville Mustangs and Paris FC in round robin play to meet the Islington Rangers early Sunday afternoon at Craddock Park, and with a win set up a date with the Weston Wolves in the final.

Despite playing almost back-to-back matches, they lifted the Aurora Cup.

It was a Canada vs. Sweden matchup to open the girls U16 tournament at Sheppard's Bush, with the Stingers facing the visiting Husqvarna squad. No love was lost in the pre-game welcoming ceremony, with the Stingers taking it to the Swedish squad 5 ? 1 to open the tournament.

Aurora then fell 2 ? 1 to Richmond Hill on Saturday afternoon, but exacted revenge on Sunday in the championship matchup.

The tournament also featured non-competitive play for those twelve and under throughout the weekend.

Sponsored this year by Fraktals, a handmade chocolate company located next door to Sheppard's Bush, the tournament has grown in leaps and bounds since its beginnings in 2002. Formerly known as the CanAm Challenge, the Cup is sanctioned through the Ontario Soccer Association and has boasted international competition from Europe and South America.

Next up for the AYSC is the annual June Festival, a two-day event on June 11 and 12 for all house league teams. Aside from the

soccer action, sponsors and vendors will be circulating the tournament.

For updates, visit www.aysc.ca.