

Athletes and coaches recognized at annual Breakfast of Champions



By Jake Courtepatte

TSN sportscaster Rod Black admitted to a crowd of young athletes Saturday morning at King's Riding Golf Club that one of his most embarrassing moments happened at that first tee.

?There was a little mix-up with the men's and women's tees.?

But amidst his amusing stories and quips about everything from fatherhood to politics, he had one message for the athletes: local sports matter.

That was the theme for Sport Aurora's annual ?Breakfast of Champions? gathering, an event celebrating the accomplishments of all eight member organizations under the Sport Aurora umbrella that were able to take home a provincial or national championship this year.

Over 140 players, coaches, and other staff were presented gold medals by event chair Doug LeGallais.

?These medals reflect the hard work and dedication put in by our athletes,? said LeGallais. ?And hopefully can inspire them to continue to work hard to accomplish their goals.?

Black, born in Winnipeg but working at CTV and TSN since the early 1990s, has kids in organizations around the Aurora area, including a daughter that plays for the Aurora Panthers and a son who is a student athlete at St. Andrew's College.

Parents need to understand the positive impact sports can have on their children's lives, he says.

?I can certainly say that my kids are better having played sports all of their lives. The power of sport can shape you into a role model in society.?

He also stressed the role of the parent or mentor, and applauded the event for providing recognition to kids and coaches that might otherwise go unnoticed.

Jim Thomson, the new owner of the Junior A Aurora Tigers, former NHLer, and motivational life coach, once again played emcee for the event. He echoed Black's applause for the event.

?You have a room full of young athletes who are champions, and this morning emphasizes how difficult that is to do,? said Thomson. ?I take myself back to when I was a kid at hockey banquets and how memorable they were. This is a plateau above that.

It's special for everyone in this room, and it's amazing Sport Aurora does this.?

Another NHLer, Brad Marsh, returned as a special guest speaker to the third annual bash. Although he enjoyed a successful hockey career spanning 15 professional years, including a three-year stint with the Toronto Maple Leafs, he said he still recalls events such as this that gave him recognition at a young age.

For more information on the event or the organization, check out www.sportaurora.ca.