

Aurora Barbs return to McCormick Cup final

By John Reich

The Aurora Barbarians senior men's team will return to the McCormick Cup Championship game Saturday.

The McCormick Cup is the symbol of supremacy in Ontario senior men's rugby. This will be the club's seventh appearance in the final in the last eight years, the Barbs failing to reach the ultimate game last year when they were eliminated in the semi-final by the eventual winner, Oakville Crusaders.

This year, the Aurora club will face their long-time rival Irish Canadians who defeated the Barbarians in the Cup finals in 2006 and 2008.

"We have been hoping for this match-up since our loss to them in 2008," said Barbarian veteran and former national team player Marco DiGirolamo, who was on the pitch for both losses to the Irish.

"In 2006, we were recently promoted and new to Cup rugby and our mistakes that year were part of a learning process. 2008 was frustrating because we felt we were the better team. We know now that it takes eighty minutes of concentrated effort to win a Cup final. We will be ready?."

The Aurora club advanced following a tense victory over the Stoney Creek Camels this past Saturday by a score of 13-10 in a steady drizzle at Fletcher's Fields.

"These are not ideal game conditions for us," quipped Barbs' Coach Ian McLeod before the match. "We prefer a dry fast track. But it is what it is, and we're ready?" he added.

McLeod's words were prophetic as his team played strong defense throughout the match. Aurora gave up an interception try ten minutes into the game but scrum half Bryn Davies slotted a penalty kick five minutes later to narrow the gap to four.

Stoney Creek flyhalf Shawn Windsor countered with a penalty kick of his own at the thirty minute mark to regain the seven point lead. It was DiGirolamo who barged across the line to score a try late in the half and with the Davies conversion to tie the game at ten apiece going into half time.

Davies' penalty from forty meters out at the twenty minute mark of the second half was the only scoring in the frame although Davies attempted one other and Windsor two all from long range that failed to fall in for points.

Aurora's second team was also victorious in their match with the Irish Canadians second squad to earn a berth in the Gee Gage Cup Championship game, a competition for tier two teams in the GTA.

The Barbarians development team dominated from start to finish to run up an impressive 45 -5 final tally.

Scoring for Aurora was Gustavo Mozzato, Najeeb Obadi, Jason Ghulati, Derek Haines, Lucas Badgery and Connor Libby each with one try. Kicker James Hulbert added four conversions.

Both the McCormick Cup and Gee gage Cup finals will be held at Fletcher's Fields Saturday, October 26.