

Barbarians tackle Toronto and Markham



By Jeff Doner

There was plenty of action at Fletcher's Fields on Saturday, keeping the Barbarians senior men's and women's teams busy throughout the day.

The first women's team made sure their season continued to roll along capturing a whopping 68 ? 35 win over the Toronto Saracens to improve their record to a perfect 3 ? 0 in the young season.

The second team also hit the scoreboard hard, also defeating the Toronto Saracens 56 ? 14 earlier in the day.

Gill Hall, the women's team director and player, said both teams are happy with the wins, but added the first team needs to shore up the defensive systems.

?The score doesn't always reflect how well you are playing,? she said. ?We are putting up a lot of points, but still being scored on a lot. Ideally you're scoring a lot of points and not getting scored on at all.?

However, Hall said there were a lot of positives in the games on Saturday.

?Our two's team saw a lot of young girls play really well and score a lot of tries for us. The one's team played solid like we always do. The Saracens are a very physical team and we played really well to meet them in that part of the game. Our scrums were pretty dominant and we stole a bunch there.?

First team player Meaghan Sheahan agreed that scrums were a bright spot for the Barbs on the weekend.

?We usually struggle with their scrums, because they've got a big pack, but I think we did very well today. We managed to stick to the game plan a little better today.?

However, despite some defensive woes, Hall is confident the first team has the skill and talent to tighten things up moving forward.

?We're starting to develop a game plan or structure that we should be following. If things start to fall apart we can go back to the basic things that we want to do, so we have to work to put that in.

?We have a lot of skilled players and some that represent Canada. Sometimes when things aren't going so well, they can kind of carry us through and make a break and get things done.?

The women will look to keep their perfect streaks alive against the Oakville Crusaders on June 8 on the road.

The Aurora Barbarians Rugby Club senior men's team was hosted by regional rival Markham Irish RFC at Fletchers Fields in Marshall Premiership play for three games on Saturday.

The third team match was a seesaw battle with the Barbarians taking an early lead only to see Markham rally to move ahead.

The Barbarians prevailed in the end escaping with a close 17-15 victory. Scoring for the Barbarians was Chris Kearsy with two tries, Spencer Smokum with one and James McLeod adding one conversion.

In the second team match up the Barbarians dominated play but took the full 80 minutes to put away a stubborn Markham side 32 - 22.

Scoring for the Aurora side was Jake Moreau, Mike Griffiths, Nolan Ott and Gavin Hodgson each with single tries. Kicker Mark Denton added three conversions and two penalty kicks.

The first team encounter was an emotional game with both sides trying to improve on one and one win/loss records. Barbarians' first year head coach Ian McLeod had previously coached in the Markham junior system and the Aurora club was recently joined by two former Markham players.

"I think we played to their strengths today," said McLeod. "They had big forwards who dominated the bottom to keep the ball tight and as a result of that they were able to walk down the field on us where our forwards are smaller and quicker and mobile and we're a move the ball kind of team. They didn't allow us to do that today, they just kept everything tight and as a result we lost the game. We allowed them to maul down the field and that really killed us today."

The Irish came out in an inspired fashion and lead 12-5 at the half. The Barbarians pulled as close as 19-12 but a red card to flyhalf Jon West put them down a man for the last 15 minutes and the Irish prevailed 26-17. Scoring for Aurora was Michael Neely and Jesses Walker with tries and the referee awarded a penalty try for foul play by the Irish. West added a single convert.

"It's a work in progress," said McLeod. "Lots of the new faces on the squad and we're just trying to get everyone acclimatized and that's a challenge, because they are all coming from different programs and we have to get our philosophies through to those individuals and we're working on that."

The Barbarians senior men's teams play next on June 8 at Fletcher's Fields where they are the home team to last year's McCormick Cup Champions Oakville Crusaders.