

## Girls to get a boost on the field with Central Canada Women's Football League



**By Jeff Doner**

When Nobleton resident Aaron Ellis' daughter, Tianna, told him she wanted to keep playing football, he knew it would be tough to find playing opportunities.

So, he got to work organizing the Central Canada Women's Football League (CCWFL), which was launched in Vaughan this month with a free skills camp.

'She came home one day and said, 'Dad, I can't play,' and as a girl playing in a male dominated sport, there were a lot of trials and tribulations,' he said. 'Then she came back to me and said she wanted to compete on the Canadian National team, but she can't do that without having a team in Ontario. I looked into it, there was nothing here for her and so, trying to be a good father, I thought I would try to put this together.'

The event was well attended, and included Toronto Argos James Yurichuk, Natey Adjei, John Chiles, Zander Robinson, Tyler Holmes and Shane Horton. They were joined by coaches and trainers from Super Elite Football, who donated their time to run drills and exercises.

Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne also stopped by and offered words of encouragement to players and the league, which is Ontario's first elite women's tackle league.

'I have a really deep rooted belief that women and girls need to have an opportunity to play the sports that they want to play,' she said. 'I believe in sport and I think it's character building and community building, and those are so important to our society and so women need to have those opportunities.'

Ellis said he first started putting things together for the league in February and hopes to have the four teams ready for Spring 2015 with registration opening in September.

It isn't set in stone just yet, but Ellis said it's likely the first four teams will be based out of Mississauga, Hamilton, Scarborough, and one in York Region.

Argos linebacker James Yurichuk of Brampton was on hand for the event and said he gives his full support to anything that opens the game to more people.

‘One of the things we always say about football is that it’s a game for everyone,’ he said. ‘Doesn’t matter if you’re short, tall, big or skinny, we’re going to find a position for you on the field. Now it really is a game for everyone in Ontario, because up until now it has only been for boys.’

‘For me, this is really important to show that football is truly for everyone, both women and men. Getting this league set up is that first step.’

The CCWFL is a not-for-profit league that Ellis hopes will mirror other successful leagues that have been established in the Maritime Provinces, Western Canada and in Montreal.

As for Tianna, she’s heading into grade 12 and her third year playing with the King City Secondary School football team. She’s looking forward to it again, but admitted she can’t wait for spring 2015.

‘This year I find that I am getting more accepted, because it’s my third year playing. This year I think the team is more accepting because they know me,’ she said. ‘But today playing with these other girls was great and I’m really excited.’

For more information on the CCWFL visit their site at [www.ccwfl.ca](http://www.ccwfl.ca)