

Reviewing a milestone year for the local sport community ? Part 1

January

SAC shuts out Bishop Kearney Selects 4-0 to capture 40th annual MacPherson Hockey Tournament

The St. Andrew's College Saints captured the 40th annual MacPherson Hockey Tournament with an emphatic 4-0 win over the Bishop Kearney Selects at La Briar Family Arena. Jared McNeil, Jack Good, Connor Arseneault, and Kieren Dervin scored for the Saints in the championship game. SAC goaltender Paolo Frasco earned the shutout?his second of the tournament?by turning aside 37 shots. The Saints ran the table at the prestigious tournament, winning all five games and bouncing back from their disappointing third-place finish in 2023.

February

25th Annual Silver Stick Tournament Opens with Vivid On-Ice Colors and International Flare

Mayor Tom Mrakas, Councillor and Sport Aurora President Ron Weese, and Central York Girls Hockey Association President Mark Dubeau graced the red carpet and opened the 25th Annual Silver Stick Hockey Tournament at the ACC. Dubeau welcomed the guests assembled, including two teams from California that took part in the on-ice festivities. Mayor Mrakas refereed the ceremonial puck drop and the 60-team international tournament was opened officially. A lively colourful spray of orange and black, royal blue and yellow, navy blue and red, and white and red jerseys lit up the venerable hockey rink which, with SARC and Magna, played host to the multilevel tournament.

Central York Panthers donate \$1000 to 360okids to assist teen survivors of human trafficking

Prior to their OWHL game versus the Barrie Sharks, the captains of the Central York Panthers U22 team?comprised of Captain Hannah Clarke, Assistant Captain Hailey McGuire, Assistant Captain Cheyenne Degeer, and Assistant Captain Ella Newman-Mixon-- and C.Y.G.H.A. President Mark Dubeau presented a \$1,000 cheque to Lesley Sims, Director of Development with 360okids.

March

Williams Wildcats Win YRAA Tier 1 Senior Boys Basketball Title; Ranked #4 in Ontario

The GW Williams Wildcats captured the YRAA Tier 1 Senior Boys Basketball championship in a convincing 92-66 victory over the Sir William Mulock Ravens at Bill Crothers SS at the end of February. Based on their 12-0 record in York Region and stellar tournament play across Ontario, the Wildcats were ranked #4 in the province heading into the OFSAA championship this week in Hamilton. To prepare the Wildcats for OFSAA and celebrate their York Region title, a video-rich pep rally took place at Williams which included Raptors broadcaster Paul Jones. Hundreds of students packed the cafeteria and Wildcats' Co-Head Coach Kent Ravelle described his squad: ?This is our unicorn team. We had the best starting player at each position in the Region and we're very athletic. We match up well with any team.?

April

Aurora Swimmer Madison Russell Commits to Nova Southeastern University Sharks in Florida

Aurora resident and Newmarket Stingray Madison Russell has signed her letter of intent to attend Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Matt Morris, Athletic Director at Bolles School in Jacksonville, Florida, announced that seven of the prep school's student-athletes, including Russell, ?committed to their post-secondary destinations and signed their letters of intent at an

in-school ceremony on April 17. Bolles School Sharks Assistant Swim Coach Claire Mills praised Russell's performances in the pool this season: "Maddie qualified for the USA Swimming Futures Championships in the 100 breaststroke at Sectionals in February. This past weekend at a Sprint meet in town, she swam her 2nd best times ever in the 100 breaststroke and 200 breaststroke."

May

Aurora resident and TSN legendary broadcaster Darren Dutchyshen dies at 57

Multiple generations of sports fans mourned the passing of one of Canada's most engaging television sports broadcasters. Aurora resident and TSN legend Darren Dutchyshen, 57, died on Wednesday "surrounded by his closest loved ones." TSN reported that Dutchyshen died following "a long battle with prostate cancer." TSN's poignant tribute to Dutchyshen was hosted by Aurora's own James Duthie who was joined by Dutch's long-time co-hosts Jennifer Hedger and Rod Smith in a moving memorial segment to their Saskatchewan-born colleague. All three TSN mainstays praised the iconic SportsCentre anchor's "endless enthusiasm for narrating highlights" and his "infectious love of the sports he covered." Smith and Hedger praised his "positive energy on the set" and championed Dutch's "ribald humor" that never abandoned him as noted in a statement by his family: "His sharp wit remained until his final moments, classically delivering plenty of jokes?most of them pretty good and all of them inappropriate."

June

St. Maximilian Kolbe Mustangs capture their first YRAA Varsity Girls' Rugby 15's Title

The St. Maximilian Kolbe Mustangs capped their best Varsity Girls Rugby season in school history by winning the York Region 15's championship. The Mustangs defeated the St. Theresa of Lisieux Lions in two straight games in a best-of-three final to secure the long-sought after YRAA title and, subsequently, punched their ticket to the provincial championships. The series sweep versus the Lions represented a Triple Crown of championships in 2023-24 for the Mustangs. In the Fall, the Aurora high school captured both the Junior 10's and Senior 10's titles to set up the trifecta this Spring. The Mustangs galloped into Peterborough to compete at OFSAA from June 3-5 against powerhouses like the #1-ranked defending champs Mayfield SS (Caledon) as well as #2-ranked John F. Ross CVI (Guelph) and #5-ranked Ajax and #7-ranked Uxbridge from Durham Region.

SAC's Dean Letourneau taken 25th by Boston and Jack Pridham chosen 92nd by Chicago at the 2024 NHL Draft

It was a big month for the St. Andrew's College hockey program as two of its graduates were chosen by NHL Original Six teams in the 2024 Draft. Forwards Dean Letourneau and Jack Pridham?who have committed to NCAA scholarships?were chosen in the first and third rounds, respectively. The professional hockey potential of SAC centre Dean Letourneau was magnified on Friday night. The Boston Bruins stepped to the microphone in Las Vegas and selected the Braeside, ON, native in the first round with the 25th pick. It's a match made in Heaven for Letourneau who is committed to play for D1 Boston College in September. Letourneau's Head Coach David Manning was present for his star player's selection by the Bruins. SAC's veteran bench boss was pleased to witness Letourneau being chosen in the first-round in Las Vegas: "It was an amazing experience for Dean and his family. Our SAC Community is so proud of him and being able to share the moment with him is something we'll never forget." Coach Manning also expressed much satisfaction at seeing 2023 SAC grad Jack Pridham selected by the Chicago Blackhawks in the third round?92nd overall: "Jack has worked so hard to get to this spot and to be taken by an Original Six team with such a rich history is really exciting for him and us as we follow his career." Pridham, a 6'2", 170-pound forward from Stouffville, played hockey in 2023-24 in the British Columbia Hockey League for the West Kelowna Warriors.

Our 2024 Sports Roundup will continue in our January 2, 2025 edition.

By Jim Stewart