

Toronto Marlies returning to Newmarket this weekend



By Jake Courtepatte

April, 1991: Missing the Calder Cup playoffs for the second straight year, the Newmarket Saints skated out of the Ray Twinney Complex for what many expected to be the last time, soon to be rebranded the St. John's Maple Leafs.

Yet, 28 years later, the Toronto Maple Leafs farm team will return to its Newmarket home this Sunday, September 29 to take on a bitter rival.

Now having found success as the Toronto Marlies since moving from Newfoundland fourteen years ago, the storied club will play host to the Rochester Americans in a preseason match to benefit the Central York Girls Hockey Association.

The Toronto Marlies have been committed to helping promote and grow female hockey so our partnership was an easy choice, said Richard Clarke, President of the CYGHA. Being able to bring the Marlies home to Newmarket to play the first AHL game since 1991 when Ray Twinney was their home ice, and they were known as the Newmarket Saints, is a wonderfully nostalgic thing to be able to offer our membership and community that is steeped richly in hockey.

A full day of events has now been added to the program, starting with a pancake breakfast served all morning with free coffee and orange juice served up by McDonalds. A showcase has been prepared to promote all levels of the CYGHA throughout the morning, before the junior A Panthers squad takes to the ice at noon to take on the Nepean Wildcats.

Outdoor hockey-themed events will run throughout the day, including a mini concert featuring the Hwy 11 Entertainers, free hot dogs supplied by Maple Lodge Farms, free coffee supplied by Tim Horton's

(a donation to the Newmarket Food Pantry would be appreciated in exchange for free food) food trucks and more.

An autograph session featuring former Maple Leafs Rick Vaive and Gary Leeman from 2:30 ? 3:30 will set up the 4 p.m. puck drop between the Marlies and the Americans, where a set of Leaf tickets will be given away to one lucky fan.

Now in its 26th year, the CYGHA has grown to include over 1,000 members, with a portion of the festivity's earnings going to the Panthers organization.

?To have grown to over 1,000 players aged 4-65+ and be celebrating 25 years was something we wanted to do up big,? said organizer Jenn Cuypers. ?The Marlies suggested a possible exhibition game in the area we could host?they took a look at the Ford Pad at the Community Centre but quickly asked to use the much larger rink at Ray Twinney.?

Tickets are going for a two-for-one price of \$35, which includes a ticket to the Marlies Family Day game on February 17 at Scotiabank Arena in Toronto against the Binghamton Devils. They can be found at www.marlies.live/newmarket.