

Windstorm leads to close call for local soccer players



By Brock Weir

The Aurora soccer community had a close call on Friday afternoon as wind ripped through the community, levelling the Aurora Soccer Dome on Industrial Parkway North.

Friday's windstorm left hundreds of thousands of people across southern Ontario, including many chunks of Aurora without power, and also left them to clean up after the violent weather toppled trees, downed fences and ripped off roof shingles.

But, it also left the Aurora Youth Soccer Club (AYSC) thanking their lucky stars.

"We were, by the grace of God, lucky that it happened at 5.30 p.m. because, half an hour later, you would have had that placed packed with OPDL (Ontario Player and Development League) players," said Roy Cohen, President of Aurora FC, of the storm destroying the dome.

One person who was inside, however, was Trevor Redvers who, along with his family, operates both the Aurora Sports Dome and the Marilyn Redvers Tennis Centre at Stewart Burnett Park.

Trevor says they cleared the Sports Dome after staff on site reported it moving in the wind.

"I said, 'Just get everybody out and we'll close for the night,'" says Trevor. "I was on my way here and I went into do a perimeter check to make sure all the emergency exits were snugly closed and it was moving around then it just popped. I am definitely glad nobody was in there."

The dome damage leaves a hole in the local sporting community and the Redvers family is assessing their next steps in getting back up and running.

The Aurora Sports Dome was on land owned by the municipality in a deal that was set to be reviewed in 2020. This, says facility owner Terry Redvers, will be a factor in forging the path forward.

"We're here with a crew that is mitigating the damage and they are picking up all the pieces they can because half our dome is sitting on the wrong field," Terry told The Auroran on Tuesday. "There is considerable damage and there is a possibility we might have to put in a new dome. If that is the case, the good news is it is at a time of the year when we're not too busy. The bad news is it will take months to get a new dome put up. It is just a question of doing what we can to make this whole place safer."

The ruined dome was 12 years old, they added, with a warranty of 20 years.

"These structures are made to be rebuilt and we will find out over the next couple of weeks whether that is going to happen or not," says Mr. Cohen. "I think that there is the issue now with the current owners, the insurance and also the Town on what they would like to see built. We (the club) are sort of okay because we're going into our outdoor season, but if they don't rebuild, we're going to need the Town to step up in regards to providing a facility to have indoor sports played."