

York Police face off against Czechs in hockey tourney

By Jeff Doner

Police officers from two hockey nations are about to collide on the ice at the Stronach Recreation Complex this week ? Canada and the Czech Republic.

The event is being organized by retired police officer Chris Barratt, president of the local chapter for the International Police Association (IPA), which is an organization that promotes friendship among all law enforcement officers all over the world.

Its membership currently exceeds 400,000 in 63 countries.

Barrett, with help from a friend in Prague, has arranged for a hockey team of both active and retired police officers and firemen from the Czech Republic to come all the way to Aurora to face off against some of York Regions finest in a three game tournament.

Barratt said the idea for the series was drawn up between himself and a retired officer from Prague, Vladimir Macek, who Barratt has kept in touch with over the years since meeting at an IPA event some years ago.

?He's an avid hockey player and we jived back and forth about the Canadian team and the Czech team and he got a hold of me and said he is going to bring a team composed of several police officers and government employees from the Czech Republic to play our guys here,? he said.

Macek is the captain of the Czech Panthers hockey team and will be leading a team of seven police officers, two firefighters and one civil servant into the tournament.

The Czech team has players from 30 to over 50 years old and will be evenly matched against three separate York Regional Police teams.

Macek said his team features a good mix of speed and skill and the teams should match up evenly.

?It's going to be a friendly game for fun. Although hockey players will be hockey players and the competitive nature can come out,? Barratt said with a laugh.

There is no charge for admission and the hope is to get a good crowd for this fun series.

?We're not charging and we'd love to see some people out there cheering,? said Barratt.

The series kicks off on Friday, April 26 at 9 a.m., followed by game two on Sunday, April 28 at 8 a.m. and finally game three on Monday, April 29 at 3 p.m.

All games will be played at the Stronach Recreation Complex located at 1400 Wellington St. E. in the Town of Aurora.