

Sports

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Local 517

Soupidis survives late error

by GORDON HOEKSTRA
Citizen Staff

It might have been the fatal error that cost him the bombers point championship at the Prince George Auto Racing Association Sunday.

Alex Soupidis pulled into the pits thinking he had blown a tire and gave up the lead position in the main event.



SOUPIDIS

The main event race was all important because this last race on the last day of racing at the PGARA speedway would decide the bomber points championship between Soupidis and Merv (Buzzard) Reeves.

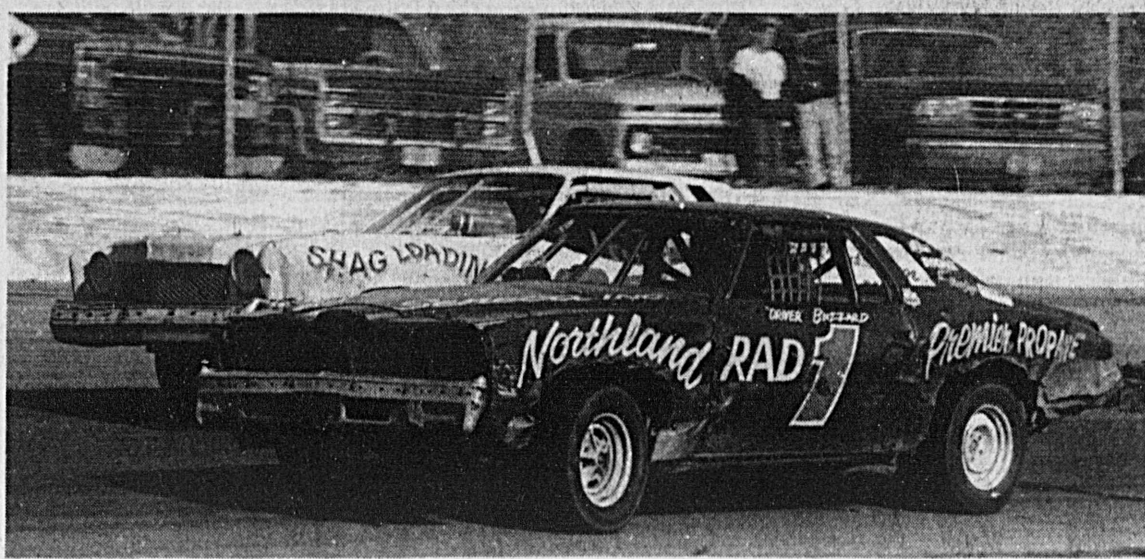
Going into the race only 18 points separated the two.

Soupidis quickly pulled out of the pits when he discovered he did not have a punctured tire but had already lost important positions to Reeves.

Reeves finished ahead of Soupidis but race officials announced an hour later that Soupidis had won the championship with 910 points to Reeves' 883 points.

"I was worried — I didn't know if that had blown it for us," said a relieved Soupidis after hearing he had won.

"We were hoping for the best and it worked out for us."



Citizen photo by Dave Milne

Merv (Buzzard) Reeves charges through the pack Sunday in a vain attempt to take the bomber title.

He said it had been a tough year. "A lot of hard work and a lot of money."

In the street stock points championship race action, Jamie McComber and Tyler Springman finished in the main event the same way they did for the year — one-two.

McComber took the points championship with 501 points, 38 points ahead of Springman.

"I'm very happy," said McComber.

"I won the first main and the last main. It's great. It's a nice way to finish the year."

Overall though, McComber did not have a good day.

He ran out of gas in the time trial, had troubles in the heat and was disqualified in the dash.

He got the car fixed for the main, though, and tied Springman for number of mains won in the year.

"Jamie's got number one, but I

can settle for second," said Springman before the main.

Springman had a good last racing day winning the A-Dash, the A-Heat, as well as placing second in the main.

"I placed third last year, so I moved up a position," he said.

Cal Johnson, who had already wrapped up the IOWA points championship before Sunday's racing, said, "Basically, we've had a good year — there's no doubt about it.

"This car's been fast all year. The crew has done a good job.

"It's a big deal for us to win a championship. We've always been the fastest car but never won a championship."

Johnson said the racing at PGARA has come a long way in three or four years.

He says this is due to the facilities and staff.

"If you don't have volunteers, you don't have a track," he said.

Standings, page 16.

Results of Sunday's points championship racing at the Prince George Auto Racing Association speedway on Aitchison Road:

Bombers

A dash: Albert Levy
B dash: Dale Slater
C dash: Dwain Hartley
D dash: Darrin Guillet
A heat: Merv Reeves
B heat: Darrin Guillet
Main: Tim Emsky

Street Stock

A dash: Tyler Springman
B dash: Chris Wicks
A heat: Tyler Springman
Main: Jamie McComber

Modifieds

A dash: Steve Johnson
B dash: Nils Aaroe
A heat: Nils Aaroe
Main: Bob Mears

Kings drop pre-season home game

by ED MILLS
Citizen Staff

Classic, old-style hockey it was not.

But that's why it's called the pre-season.

The Prince George Spruce Kings ended their exhibition schedule Sunday night with a sloppy, chippy and generally lacklustre 5-1 loss to the Williams Lake Mustangs at the Coliseum.

"The guys looked a little nervous and uptight. I thought they'd be looking forward to playing at home but it just wasn't that way," said Spruce Kings coach Jeff Rowland.

The loss, in front of about a 1,000 fans, was all the more confusing for Rowland who watched his team pound the Mustangs 7-2 in Williams Lake Saturday.

"Obviously we changed personnel (for Sunday's game) but the guys just didn't seem to be into it out there, especially the forwards," he said. "We had a lot of chances and we carried the play but it didn't work out."

If anything, the game gave Rowland and general manager Len McNamara one more chance to evaluate their players under game conditions before making final cuts.

Those cuts will be made today.

"It certainly reinforced some opinions we had about some players no doubt about that," Rowland said.

One player who did make an impression on Rowland in an otherwise forgetful game was 16-year-old goaltender Vance Hrabchuk.

"It's pretty tough to find the best player tonight, but I thought our goaltenders played pretty good," he said. "Hrabchuk was excellent."

The baby-faced Hrabchuk, who is fighting for the backup goalie's job with Brent Saharchuk and Richard Heighington, said he hopes his performance raised his stock a bit in the coach's eyes. But even

he said it wasn't the best of efforts.

"I thought I played pretty good (but) I played the puck pretty stupid a couple of times. I guess that comes with experience," said the Prince George native who allowed one goal and stopped 20 shots in a period-and-a-half of work.

The club's No. 2 goalie, Nathan Grobins allowed the other four goals, all in the first period, in his 30 minutes on the ice. He made 10 saves.

Prince George's goal was scored by Derek Trainor.

Rowland said the cheap-shot, chippy play, which culminated in a third-period fight between Kings defencemen Scott Erwin and the Mustangs' Ben Stanchfield, was given and taken about equally on both sides.

"I guess when the guys aren't skating you get a lot of that," he said.

Mustangs first-year coach Harvey Smyl said youthful exuberance probably had a bit to do with it too.

"There was a lot of hitting from behind, a lot of stickwork, but it's exhibition, guys are looking to make the team, doing what it takes.

"Some of the kids, it's their first time playing junior A and they want to make an impression," Smyl said.

Mario LeBlanc, Davey Jones, Bob Haidish and rookie Brad Maier had a goal and an assist each to lead the Spruce Kings in Saturday's win. Chad Alderson, Lyle Magdalinski and Brent Rosa also scored, while Dino Caputo had two assists.

Magdalinski, Lance Potskin, Sarachuk, Heighington, Jason Jukes, Jones, Darren Watson and Bob Haidish didn't dress for Sunday's game.

The Spruce Kings open their regular season schedule at home Friday against the Mustangs. Tickets for that game are free and available at Extra Foods.

SELES TOP WOMAN

Edberg's victory puts him on top

NEW YORK (AP) — It was a new, improved Stefan Edberg that walked off the court with his second straight U.S. Open title, the world's No. 1 ranking and \$500,000.

This Stefan Edberg kissed the net cord in his quarter-final match.

This Stefan Edberg kicked a ball, smacked the net and threw a towel.

This Stefan Edberg even huddled the net after Pete Sampras buried a backhand service return into the net on match point, then fled to the side of the court to embrace his wife of five months, Annette. In plain view. With a packed Stadium and international television audience watching.

And in the post-match news conference Sunday, this Stefan Edberg, the king of the one-word answers, actually rambled.

This, indeed, is a new Stefan Edberg.

"I feel very good about myself at the moment," he said. "I am playing good tennis and I am fighting for my life out there, but I am coming through."

Edberg, the tournament's second seed, battled through three consecutive five-set matches, beginning with the fourth round — a total of 13 hours 43 minutes, including a record 5½ hours in the semifinals Saturday against Michael Chang — just to reach the final. Once there, he won in comparative ease, sweeping past Sampras 3-6, 6-4, 7-6 (7-5), 6-2 in 2:51 to clinch the last Grand Slam event.

"I really earned it this year because I have worked very hard and I have had some unbelievable tough matches," Edberg said. "But I think that helped me a lot today."

"Mentally I was feeling very strong today; the strongest I felt all week."

On Saturday, top-seeded Monica

Seles also won her second straight U.S. Open women's singles title, defeating No. 5 Arantxa Sanchez Vicario of Spain 6-3, 6-3. It was the 13th Grand Slam tournament Seles has played, and her seventh victory.

While Sampras had a comparatively relaxing semifinal Saturday night, getting past top-seeded Jim Courier in four sets, he doubled over near the end of that match with stomach cramps. He was given rehydration fluids intravenously.

"I had a very long night last night and didn't get too much sleep," Sampras said. "But I am not giving any excuses."

"He won the important points."

Sampras was tired.

"As the match wore on, especially in the fourth set, I was out of gas," he said. "Maybe more mentally than physically."

"I was very tired, very exhausted."

The victory also boosted Edberg back into the world's No. 1 ranking, a spot he last held in April.

"The more important thing to me today was to defend my title; that is what I was here for," he said. "Becoming No. 1 again, that's a nice present for me."



Citizen photo by Dave Milne

Former national team coach Tony Walters addresses a crowd of city youth soccer players Sunday at the Rotary Park opening.

Rotary opening cold, wet

by GORDON HOEKSTRA
Citizen Staff

Hundreds of people were huddled under umbrellas Sunday in the middle of the six new soccer fields off the corner of Ospika Boulevard and 15th Avenue.

They were waiting for the official opening of the new Rotary Park to get underway.

Despite the downpour, the ceremonies did get underway and the soccer fields were officially opened.

And if nothing else, the rain was good for the grass.

Several dignitaries were on hand including former Vancouver Whitecaps and national team coach Tony Walters.

He says the fields are a big step forward for Prince George and B.C. Youth Soccer.

"It means a good facility but also the development of skills as well."

He says it took an enormous amount of initiative on the part of the people who were involved in getting the fields started.

Another of the dignitaries, the new chairman of B.C. Youth Soccer, Jim Lamond, says the new fields are great. "It's going to give (Prince George) what it really needs."

"There's very few facilities like this in B.C. It's just amazing that there will be 10 soccer fields in one area."

"They'll be able to host major tournaments here."

He says he is impressed with how well Prince George youth soccer teams have done at the provincial level.

"The dedication of the people here is

what's done it. With a facility like this all you can do is grow from here.

"I can hardly wait to come back next year."

Lamond says B.C. Youth Soccer will be establishing regional centres across the province and hopes to have one in Prince George.

Shafeed Rahman, a former Prince George Youth Soccer chairman, is on the board of directors of B.C. Youth Soccer in charge of interior development and regional centres.

He says it's time to stop sending youth players with potential down to the Lower Mainland.

Rahman says they will develop Prince George as a regional centre for coaching, referee and player development.

"We've got to start somewhere."

NORMAN ENDS LOSING STREAK

Shark devours Canadian Open field

by DOUG SMITH
Canadian Press

OAKVILLE, Ont. — A lot of tee shots have gone astray, a bunch of iron shots have missed their mark and plenty of putts have errantly rolled by the cup since Greg Norman last won a golf tournament.

Those disappointments of the last 28 months can be forgotten now, thrown away like a sliced-up golf ball, because the Great White Shark is back in the winner's circle again.

Norman birdied the second playoff hole Sunday evening to beat Bruce Lietzke in the \$1.2-million Canadian Open and record his first PGA Tour victory since May 1990.

Taking home the winner's share of \$215,000 pales beside the relief Norman felt after collecting his 10th career Tour win and second Canadian Open title at the 83rd annual tournament played over the par-72, 7,102-yard Glen Abbey Golf Club.

"It's been a horrible two years and to fight it off and win that way speaks volumes," Norman, the winner here in 1984, said after his sudden-death victory, which was the 60th worldwide triumph of his illustrious career. "I'll admit it, I was under a lot of pressure out there."

The Aussie, 37, who now lives in Florida, made a great par out of a fairway bunker on the 71st hole and birdied the 72nd with another great up-and-down shot to tie Lietzke at 8-under 280. He followed with an outstanding par from the long grass next to the green on the first playoff hole.

Then, with the demons of the last two years dancing in his head, he hit a 253-yard three-wood into a bunker behind the green at the par-5 18th hole, delicately lifted his sand shot to within four feet of the cup and solidly rolled in the tournament-winning birdie putt.

"It could have been a whole different set of

circumstances, but Greg did what he had to do," said Lietzke, who carried a two-shot lead into the final round but struggled to a 73 and had to settle for second and \$130,600. "You kind of expect those things from Greg Norman because he's done it often before."

Defending champion Nick Price, who missed eight putts inside of 12 feet during the last 18 holes, was third at 281 after a final-round 69.

Tied for fourth at 282 were Joey Sindelar, with the day's low round at 67, Jay Delsing, who finished with a birdie, eagle, birdie, birdie en route to a 69, and Corey Pavin, with a 70.

Dan Hallderson of Brandon, Man., Dave Barr of Richmond, B.C., and Jerry Anderson of Toronto were the top Canadians at 291, after shooting 70, 73 and 73, respectively.

Ray Stewart of Abbotsford, shot 75 and finished at 294 while Richard Zokol of Richmond could only manage a 78 and came in at 298.

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