

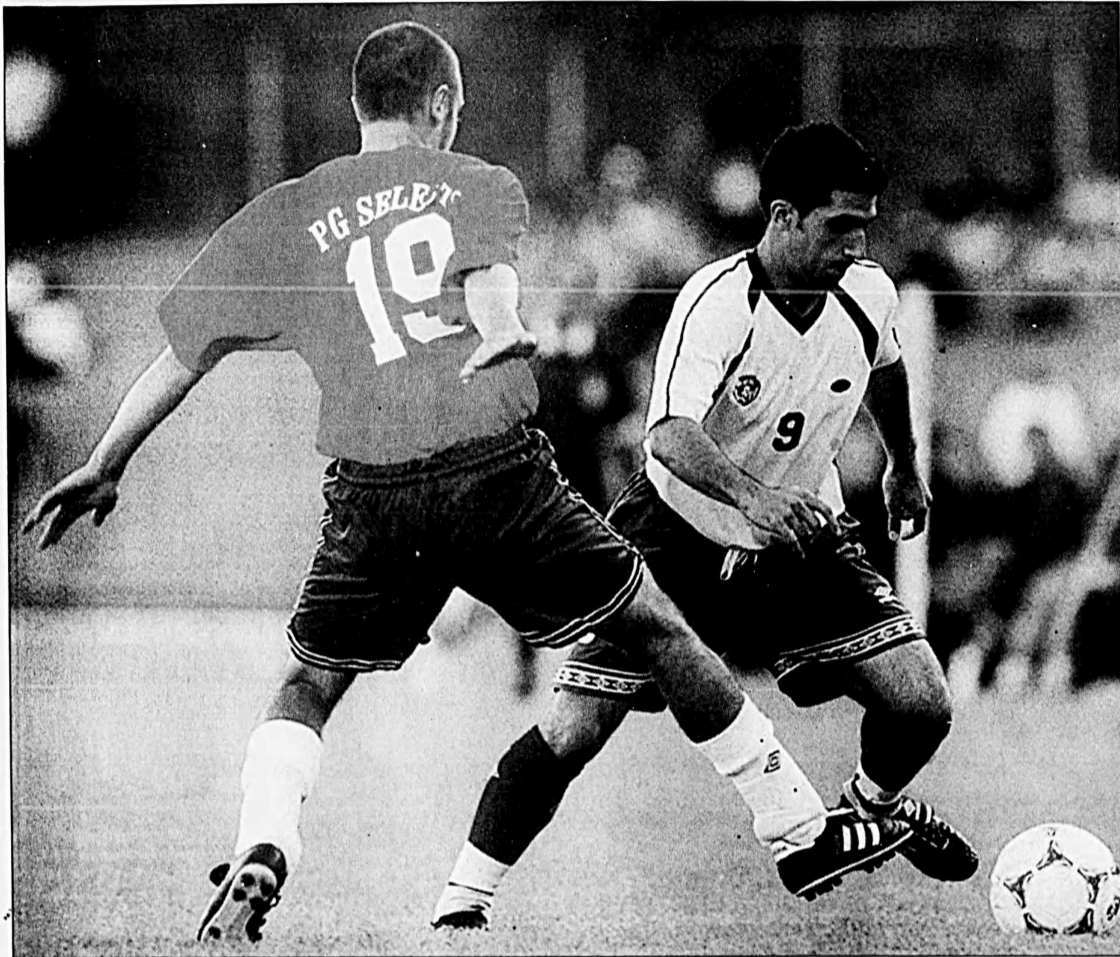


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Whitecaps/Breakers showcase pro soccer



Mike Mauro of the Prince George Selects tries to impede the ball-handling progress of Vancouver Whitecaps forward Alfredo Valente. The Whitecaps and Vancouver Breakers combined to beat the local side 4-1 in an exhibition match.

by **JIM SWANSON**
Citizen Sports Editor

Justin Kozjak was the busiest person at Massey Place Stadium — busier even than the ticket-sellers dispensing ducats to the lineup of last-minute buyers among the 1,586 who witnessed the exhibition soccer match Wednesday.

Kozjak played the role of the duck in a shooting gallery as the goalkeeper for the Prince George Selects, facing the constant fire of pro players who ply their trade for the Vancouver Whitecaps men's team and Vancouver Breakers women's team.

Kozjak kept the score close — especially with dazzling stops in the opening half and in the waning minutes — in a 4-1 win for the Whitecaps/Breakers over the Selects.

"I was busy, but it was fun," said Kozjak, who plays for Honda North/Citizen in the North Cariboo Senior Soccer League.

"I expected about that much work. A couple of those goals were good goals, and they really get a lot on it."

Kozjak's play aside, he most impressive player on the pitch, without question, was Whitecaps forward Terry St. Louis. The lanky striker did his job twice, completing a lovely cross from Johnny Sulentic in the first half and extending the lead to 4-0 in the opening minutes of the second half.

"This was a game to come out and entertain the crowd, and that's what I tried to do," said St. Louis, who toyed with the Selects on one play in the first half, only to have his pass directed away by Shawn Basi.

"It's all about enjoyment and having the crowd participate. They have a good team, lacking a little bit of experience, but they kept coming. They were the home team so they tried hard."

The Whitecaps opened the scoring on a truly professional shot by Alfredo Valente, who drove a ball from in tight high to the right of Kozjak. After St. Louis's first goal, Breakers leading scorer Diana Artuso completed a cross from Valente with a minute to go before the break.

"It took us a half to get going, because none of us have ever been in a game against players like this," said Kozjak.

"Everyone was nervous — I know I was. At the end, we were getting little spurts and we were pressuring. We could've got a couple goals even."

The crowd roared to life in the second half when Prince George started getting quality chances. Alain Ruch was wide left from 10 yards out, and Mike Mauro was stuffed by a sprawling save from keeper Alex Marques a few minutes later.

The persistence paid off in the 73rd minute on a play orchestrated and completed by a duo of 16-year-olds. Spencer Pasowisty cleared his mark around the right side, directing the ball across the crease to the waiting foot of Mike Mauro.

Mauro had the easy part, tapping it into the goal.

"I was sitting in my bed the night before, just saying: 'I hope I score, I hope I score'," said Mauro, who was part of the under-18 provincial championship team that was introduced at half time. "I thought it was a longshot for me to score, but it happened."

The only goal Mauro said compares with Wednesday's mark came in the B.C. championship earlier this summer in Castlegar. "(Wednesday's goal) is probably the biggest one I've scored. Those guys were amazing — just awesome. That was pretty good that the girls (from the Breakers) were better than us."

The final Assault

Art Knapp clinches PGSLA title with 9-5 win over Excel Transport

by **JIM SWANSON**
Citizen Sports Editor

Chalk one up for the old guy who came out of the stands to play a key role in a championship.

Ron Edgar, the 47-year-old replacement net-minder for the Art Knapp Assault, capped his nine-game return to lacrosse with a pair of trophies on Wednesday. He was named the co-playoff MVP and got to carry the Dale Rolufs Memorial award given to the Prince George Senior Lacrosse Association's playoff champs.

Edgar, who came out of retirement to fill in when Assault starting goalie Brian Stanley was lost to gall bladder surgery, made 33 saves in Art Knapp's 9-5 win over the Excel Transport Bandits, clinching the PGSLA title in five games.

"I feel old, but I guess if Fred (Doig) can come back and play one game at 73, then I can come back at 47 and play nine games," laughed Edgar, who shared the playoff MVP award with teammate David Keough, who amassed 44 points in the playoffs.

"To be honest, I thought I was just going to help out. I figured we'd lose a few games, but I really didn't think we'd win. But to go eight wins and one loss in the nine games I played, that's just unbelievable."

Which leads to the obvious question — is Edgar going back to his usual role as general manager of the Cap-Abilities Oldstyler's? Or does the tour continue?

"We'll see what happens next year. I'm considering dressing a few games for my team, yeah," he said.

In this final series, both teams were short-staffed because of a combination of injuries and work commitments. The difference over five games was Art Knapp's defensive posture that kept Excel shots restricted to the outlying areas.

Keough had three goals and two assists to lead all scorers, with Clarke Anderson and Craig Dunfield scoring twice each for the Assault. Jesse Huffman and Mike Engbrecht each had three points for Excel.

Mason Gratto faced 58 shots in the Excel net.

"Those guys flat-out out-hustled us," said Excel captain Brett Doig. "It seemed that after that first game, we just couldn't keep the pressure on for the whole game. You have to give Ron Edgar credit, he stood in there and did the job. Our offence didn't get on track this whole series, but we have no excuses."



(Top) Members of the Art Knapp Assault pose with the Dale Rolufs Memorial Trophy after winning the Prince George Senior Lacrosse Association title Wednesday at Kin 1 with a 9-5 decision over the Excel Transport Bandits. (Right) Assault captains, from left, Adam Moleski, Shawn Ingham, James Larmand and Karen Keough accept the hardware.



Host province teams in good condition

B.C. teams are undefeated after the opening day of play at the Canadian girls soccer championships.

The B.C. under-17s shut out the Maritimes 3-0 Wednesday at Massey Place Stadium, and the under-15 B.C. team followed up by playing Saskatchewan to a 2-2 tie at Rotary Field.

In other under-17 results, Ontario blanked Manitoba 2-0, Quebec beat Saskatchewan 5-2 and Alberta hammered Newfoundland 12-0.

In under-15 play, Ontario defeated Newfoundland 6-1, Alberta stopped the Maritimes 3-0, and Quebec got past Manitoba 2-0.

The tournament continues today at Rotary and Massey Place fields. Playoffs start Saturday and the finals are set for Sunday. Today's schedule is as follows:

Under-15

9 a.m. — Ontario vs. Saskatchewan at Massey Place Stadium (MP); Quebec vs. Manitoba, at Rotary Field (R).

11 a.m. — Alberta vs. Maritimes (MP); B.C. vs. Newfoundland (R)

Under-17

1 p.m. — Ontario vs. Maritimes (MP); Alberta vs. Newfoundland (R)

3 p.m. — Quebec vs. Saskatchewan (R); B.C. vs. Manitoba (MP)

Opening ceremonies follow at 8 p.m. at Massey Place Stadium.

Gonzalez bombs Sox

BOSTON (AP) — The problem for the Toronto Blue Jays isn't playing well, it's playing well consistently.

Toronto held Boston to one hit in the last nine innings and beat the Red Sox 4-3 Wednesday night on Alex Gonzalez's homer in the 10th.

"There are times we look like a first-place team, win three, four in a row," Gonzalez said. "Then we lose four in a row."

The Blue Jays showed their good and bad sides Wednesday — allowing three runs in the first on back-to-back homers by Manny Ramirez and Dante Bichette, then stopping Boston until Troy O'Leary singled in the 10th.

"To keep them down in this ball park is a great testament to our pitching," Toronto manager Buck Martinez said.

The Red Sox fell 2 1/2 games out of the AL East lead, their biggest deficit of the season. They trail the New York Yankees, who beat Detroit 4-2 Wednesday.

Empey brings back top-10 finish from triathlon championships

by **TED CLARKE**
Citizen staff

Triathletes Ron Empey and Olympic champion Simon Whitfield had something in common over the weekend at the world triathlon championships in Edmonton.

Both finished sixth from the top of the planet in their respective triathlon races.

Empey, 59, posted a sixth-place result in the men's 55-59-year-old class at the world age group (amateur) championships Saturday, the day before Whitfield finished sixth in the pro open world event that followed Sunday.



EMPEY

"It was a really good race and I'm quite happy with it," said Empey, who works as a millwright at North Central Plywood.

"I was only about a minute behind third, fourth and fifth. They were all grouped together within three seconds of each other at the finish."

The Edmonton course conformed to Olympic distances

— 1,500-metre swim, 40-kilometre bike ride and 10-kilometre run.

"The swim worked out really well for me. I stayed up just behind the lead group. It was a hilly bike course and that felt the weakest for me. But the run was flat and that felt good. I felt pretty strong on the run but in such a big race (1,600) it's hard to know where your competitors are."

Empey also cracked the top-10 at the 1992 world championships in Muskoka, Ont.

"We had 40 in our age group and even the 60-64 age group had 40. That's the biggest numbers

I've ever in those older age groups. There's no doubt about it, it's growing."

Empey plans to compete in one more triathlon later this summer, likely in the Okanagan.

■ Graeme Martindale, formerly of Prince George, captured the men's 20-29-year-old amateur title Saturday. Martindale, the Canadian champion, now makes his home in Vancouver and will be attending law school at the University of Western Ontario in London, Ont.

At the same event, Bob Simpson of Quesnel won the men's 40-49-year-old title.