

Sports

Messi gets two
against Nigeria
P. 13



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HOCKEY

Harkins invited to U-18 camp

Jansen Harkins has about a month left in his hockey off-season. In early August, the 17-year-old Prince George Cougars forward has an audition for Canada's under-18 national team set to begin Aug. 2 in Calgary. He's among 44 players from across the country, including 18 from the WHL, invited to the week-long tryout. Harkins was the Cougars' top rookie in 2013-14 with 34 points in 67 games. He also served as captain of Team Pacific, silver medal winners at the World Under-17 Hockey Challenge. Jared Bethune, who was added to the Cougars 50-player protected list in 2013, was also invited to the U-18 camp. The Warroad, Minn., native played high school hockey last season in Warroad and finished with 31 goals and 84 points in 25 games. He also collected five points in six games in the USHL for the Lincoln Stars. The 22-player team will represent Canada in the U18 Ivan Hlinka Memorial Cup, Aug. 11-16 in Breclav, Czech Republic and Piastany, Slovakia. Canada has won the tournament six straight years and nine of the last 10.

MAKING IT RIGHT

A story in Monday's Citizen about a local promotion at the Rotary Skatepark to celebrate national Go Skateboarding Day incorrectly identified the sponsors of the Saturday event. The day-long event was organized and sponsored by local skateboard/snowboard clothing retailer Chris and Brad Apparel (CBA) and ONE Boardshop of Spruceland Mall.

CURLING

Jacobs' 2014 Olympic ring stolen

BOYLE, Alta. (CP) — A member of the Canadian men's curling team that won gold at the Sochi 2014 Olympics has had his champion ring stolen. Mounties say the ring belonging to Brad Jacobs was stolen from a motel room in Boyle, Alta., on either June 20 or June 21. Jacobs was taking part in a charity golf tournament in Boyle at the time of the theft. The ring has a square face that is curved around the edges and has the Olympic rings in the centre. The face of the ring is inscribed with the words "Olympic Champions 2014" and on the inside engraved with "Brad Jacobs Skip." Other personal items were also stolen, police said. "The ring has a great amount of sentimental value to Mr. Jacobs," said RCMP Const. Alex Ayres. "While we continue to investigate the theft, our hope is that the ring be reunited with Mr. Jacobs. "We are seeking the public's assistance in its recovery."

NHL

Penguins make head coach hire

PITTSBURGH (AP) — The Pittsburgh Penguins have hired Mike Johnston as the team's new head coach. Johnston replaces Dan Bylsma, who was fired on June 6. The 57-year-old Johnston, introduced at a Wednesday news conference, spent the past six years with the Portland Winterhawks of the Western Hockey League. He previously served as an NHL associate head coach with the Los Angeles Kings and Vancouver Canucks.

From Sprucecaps to Golden Girls, women's soccer thriving

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Terry Phillips grew up on a fastball diamond, where it's a cardinal sin to boot the ball.

So when she took up soccer well into her adult life, having never played the game, her natural instinct was to reach out and touch the leather instead of letting her feet and forehead do the work.

"I'd never played soccer before and most of us had never played before — I grew up in Quesnel and we played ball," said Phillips, a retired elementary school teacher. "It was crazy because there were offsides and you couldn't touch the ball with your hand. Coming from playing ball, my hand automatically came out.

"We were just a bunch of ladies trying to get soccer going in town and it was a ton of fun. I loved it because you got to play a lot more than in ball. You're moving all the time in soccer and you have fewer injuries because of that, not stop-and-go as much."

Phillips was 32 in 1987 when her friends, Paula Lesage and Nancy Stagg, convinced her to join soccer with the North Hart Dental Sprucecaps, one of three teams in the upstart Prince George Women's Soccer Association. Myatovic Construction was one of the original team sponsors and still funds a team in the league, which has grown to 18 teams.

Steve Lamble, who died last year of pancreatic cancer, was the original Sprucecaps coach that first year, their only coach that first season. The players thanked him for efforts by giving him a sweatshirt that designated him "Sprucecaps coach of the year."

The year before the PGWSA was formed there was just one Prince George women's team playing against teams from Quesnel and Terrace. Within a few years, graduating youth soccer players needed a place to play and there were four teams in the scene.

"Most of us were out there just to have fun and we got some sponsors on board," said Patti Smith, the first PGWSA president, who played with her older sister Nikie Gill on the Sprucecaps.

"In 1990 we had the B.C. Summer Games in Prince George and we ended up having two teams in that tournament and that's when we started to get a bit more serious. Even the youth league was just starting getting going, then. We didn't win [the Games tournament] but we were pretty happy with how we did."

In the early years of the league, women's soccer was played on school fields, starting at PGSS, then moving to Rob Brent elementary school. It wasn't until 2006 that the PGWSA moved to its own two-field facility, Michelle Lamarche Field.

"The fields were very rough, with potholes and who knows what else," said Phillips. "The calibre of the league is way higher now. As players from youth soccer come in, they bring up the calibre again."

For Phillips, the learning curve was steep, but she fell in love with the game and it's remained part of her life for the past 27 years. In all that time, Phillips has missed just one season. She got married in 1996 and wanted to devote more time to her husband and stepsons.

Phillips is a midfielder for Golden Girls,



Caribou Brewmmasters' Robyn Kaplan fields a high ball while holding off Golden Girls' Michele David during Thursday's league game at Michelle Lamarche soccer field.

formerly Central Mohawk, which started the season in Division 2 but has since been relegated to Division 3. At 59, Phillips is the second-oldest player in the PGWSA, behind 60-year-old Yvonne Yaschuk, who plays for NIFI/Liquor Warehouse. Thirteen other players in the league are 50 or older.

"I'm in fairly good shape for my age but I've never been a runner," said Phillips, who also plays indoor soccer in the winter months. "I don't have a lot of skills, I didn't play until I was 32. A lot of these women have played

since they were young, and have had coaching. I know having me on the team has to be frustrating to them, but we always get along and everybody on the team is encouraging.

Notwithstanding a motorcycle injury that sidelined her with a hip injury for a few weeks earlier this month, the key for Phillips and her soccer longevity is to make sure she gets a good warm-up before she leaves for the field, then have a post-game stretching session when she gets back home.

— see **BOOTING**, page 10

Women's soccer promotes division leaders

Congratulations are in order for Caribou Brewmmasters, Alfredo's Pub and QML Contracting.

They've all been promoted to a higher division based on their results this season as division leaders in the Prince George Women's Soccer Association.

With promotion comes relegation, and that means three PGWSA teams — Scottie's Hotties, Golden Girls and Tillmanns — have each been dropped to a lower-calibre division when the league resumes play July 11 after an 18-day summer break.

"We just want to see what it's like and we're going to try this for a few years," said PGWSA president Kirsty Ames. "Until this year we couldn't make a team move up. We've been like, 'Oh you guys don't want to move up, even though you're too good for your division?' This year we are making them move up."

The 18-team league started the season with

five Division 1 teams — Kodiak Chrome, Accelerated Physiotherapy, Mountain Air Kettle Corn, Xconditioning and Scottie's Hotties.

The Brewmmasters have moved up to the top division, while the Hotties are now part of Division 2 along with CNC Continuing Education, CNC TyAnda and Division 3 leaders Alfredo's Pub. Division 3 consists of Myatovic Construction, Pathfinder Forestry, Westcana Electric and Division 4 leaders, QML Contracting. Tillmanns drops to Division 4 along with Columbia Bitulithic, NIFI/Liquor Warehouse and Can You Dig It Contracting.

Division 1 includes 10 players who are either current members of the UNBC Timberwolves varsity team, T-wolves alumni, or who played on the Prince George Youth Soccer Association under-18 all-star team last year.

"If they want to play in our league, they're

dispersed [in a draft] among the teams," said Ames. "Last year we put a limit on the number of what we call premier players because that's why our Division 1 initially broke down a few years ago. All the best players were going to the same team and the rest of the teams couldn't keep up. "The scores have been close, so I think it's working."

The season resumes Friday, July 11 at Michelle Lamarche Field with undefeated Kodiak Chrome (6-0-1) taking on fourth-place Xconditioning (2-3-2). For the first time in several years the schedule runs into September. Sydney Hall of Kodiak Chrome leads all Division 1 shooters with 13 goals in seven games, followed by Nicole Lodge of Xconditioning (eight goals) and Jamie McFarlane and Janessa Jones, both of Accelerated Physiotherapy (six goals each).

— CLARKE, Citizen staff



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