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## SPORTS



Ryan Pfeiffer / Metroland

WHITBY -- Brooklin Redmen's John LaFontaine, left, is one of four members of the Saskatchewan Rush team that won a National Lacrosse League championship.

## Redmen drawing flies for fans

### Plenty of NLL talent on team for 50th anniversary campaign

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WHITBY — The Brooklin Redmen are going to experience some growing pains, if Monday's 13-5 loss in Oakville is any indication, but there's little question the team is far better than a year ago and likely to be in the hunt for first place in the Major Series Lacrosse league this season.

The question, sadly, is: does anyone care?

Through the first two home games, the answer seems to be: not enough.

With a roster now stacked with National Lacrosse League talent, the Redmen opened the season with three wins and a tie before the June 13 setback, including home-floor victories of 12-5 over Bramp-

ton June 1 and 8-6 over Cobourg June 8.

The attendance for those two games at the Iroquois Park Sports Centre was 255 and 273 respectively.

"I totally don't understand. The product is there now," says Wayne Colley, the team's general manager and coach. "It's very exciting to watch. There's no question about that part."

The issue is not unique to the Redmen in the six-team league, as only Peterborough and Cobourg have been drawing decent crowds in the early going.

Peterborough, a perennial contender, routinely draws more than 3,000 fans to the Memorial Centre, while Cobourg, in its first season since relocating from Kitchener-Waterloo, packed more than 1,000 into the Cobourg Community Centre to see the Redmen June 4.

Six Nations is averaging 300 fans per game, while both Oakville's and Brampton's attendance is below that of the Redmen.

"I'm not too sure what the factors are,"

Colley says. "I would like to think it's the hockey and basketball playoffs, but it's hard to tell what it is. We're trying our hardest to get people back in the fold to come and watch us and share in the experience of the Brooklin Redmen."

This being the 50th anniversary of the team, the Redmen have drawn many local players back to the team this season to take a run at the Mann Cup national championship trophy, which has been won seven times before but not since 2000.

With the addition of seven players who were part of the NLL championship series, including superstar Mark Matthews, the Redmen now have 16 players from the pro league who have suited up so far, with more likely to follow.

The Redmen hosted Six Nations last night (after our deadline) in a battle for first place and travel to Hagersville to face the Chiefs again Tuesday. They will get a chance at revenge on Oakville at Iroquois Park next Wednesday at 8 p.m.

## Durham United men's and women's soccer teams sit in second place

DURHAM — Durham United FA's two entries in the League1 Ontario soccer loop are off to nice starts, both currently sitting in second place.

Stephen Lamanna scored two early goals as the men's team (5-1-1) dealt the Woodbridge Strikers (5-1-1) their first loss, 2-0 on Sunday, July 12, and moved into a tie with them for second place in the Eastern Conference, a point back of Vaughan Azzurri (5-0-2).

Ben Cowman earned the shutout in goal for the Durham club, which is next in action Sunday, June 19 in Toronto.

Durham United's women's team (4-0-2) remained undefeated following a 1-0 road victory over North Mississauga (1-3-2) Friday, June 10. Geneva Winterink's first-half goal stood up as Laura Dougall had the clean sheet.

Durham FC trails FC London (5-0-0) by a point with a head-to-head clash coming

next, on Friday, June 24 at 8 p.m. at Oshawa's Terry Kelly Field.

Darby FC, meanwhile, a joint effort of the Darlington and Whitby soccer clubs, sits in last place in the nine-team women's division with only one tie to show for its first five games.

After opening with 1-1 draw with North Mississauga, Darby FC has dropped the past four, including most recently a 14-0 blowout in Woodbridge (3-0-3).



Dr. Douglas Smith  
Guest columnist

## Managing failure and defeat key to success

Every athlete and team has experienced failure, defeat and a sense of hopelessness and helplessness.

It is completely natural to get upset and want to give up at times.

Many of the greatest athletes never achieve their dreams of being a professional or going to the Olympics.

My research and experience tells me that they lack the mental toughness and fortitude to accept losses as a stepping stone to improvement and greatness.

All the best performers have all gone through periods where things were not going well. Coaches and friends thought they didn't have what it takes to be an all-star. Those who listened to the naysayers never made it to the big leagues.

I have heard hundreds of stories over the years about superstar athletes who should have been a shoe-in for the professional leagues and the Olympics but couldn't deal with failure and needed to be perfect all the time regardless of the circumstances.

Champion teams and athletes never give up no matter the score and no matter how many losses they experience.

Look at Don Cherry: he never made it to the NHL, but was one of the best coaches in the NHL and one of the best TV commentators for NHL hockey games in Toronto.

Look at Mike Weir: he was not outstanding as a junior golfer and no one, including himself, ever dreamed of winning the Masters or winning eight times on the PGA tour.

Justin Williams from Cobourg is another example of a tireless plodder who never gives up. No one thought he would make it to the NHL and win three Stanley Cups, as he has done. He just kept on going and improving every year like Mike Weir.

These guys were classic grinders and took each defeat as a signal to get better.

The message is very clear: If you want to be great, never let failure or defeat get you down; let failure be your inspiration to further develop your mental and emotional skills to be tougher, stronger and wiser.

The real game is in your head and heart.

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