



New hockey school starting up



Bruce Hain photo

Future player in training. Nine-month-old Nolan Caruso is already a hockey fan says his father, Alex, one of the four founders of the South Simcoe Hockey School.

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Four life-long friends who share "a real passion for hockey" are preparing to launch a hockey school for youngsters at the new Innisfil Recreation Centre in October.

Steve Sands and Mike Miceli are joining brothers Alex and Jamie Caruso in the enterprise, which focuses on boys and girls aged five and up.

All four partners share extensive experience as top-level players, coaches and instructors. Jamie Caruso was a standout player with the Kitchener Rangers Jr. A team in the early 1990s and even played two exhibition games for the Hartford Whalers of the NHL in 1992.

"All of us have worked at the Varsity Hockey School in Brampton," Alex Caruso says. "It's one of the most successful schools around. We've taught thousands of kids. Now, we're all living up north and wanted to start our own concept here."

"We have a desire to develop young players," Jamie Caruso says. "I have three boys myself. We saw a real need for a hockey school here."

Alex, who runs an adult league in Stroud on Thursday nights, says a number of his players are fathers who were looking for a school for their kids to improve their skills.

"We know what it takes to develop a kid and what it takes to be successful," Sands says. "We've played Triple A hockey and Jr. A."

"You only have so much time to practice when you're in a league," Jamie adds, "and you have to do team things. Skill things are left on the side. In my opinion, that's why Canadian hockey has lagged behind – you don't get the time to improve your on-ice skills."

The quartet is eager to get rolling.

"We've signed a contract for 26 ice times," Alex Caruso says. "Eventually, we'd like to run the school year round. Having the school at the new rec centre is a great opportunity to use a state-of-the-art facility."

The initial three session (based on age), eight-week program begins Sat. Oct. 20 to Dec. 8. A second session is scheduled from Dec. 15 to Feb. 2, 2008. The final session will be held from Feb. 16 to March 22. One-hour sessions commence at 7:30 a.m.

Registrations for the school start Sat., Sept. 15 from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the Stroud Community Centre, 7883 Yonge St. Other signups take place Sunday, Sept. 16 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., Wed., Sept. 19 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. and Friday, Sept. 21 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

For more information, visit www.southsimcoehockey.com