

Caledon Cavaliers rugby is back in town

By Robert Belardi

You know what they say: you don't know what you have until it is gone.

About 20 years ago, Humberview Secondary School graduates who played on the school rugby team had nowhere else to turn. Their high school career was over with, but these boys and girls wanted to continue.

At the Annual General Meeting of the Toronto Rugby Union, a group of girls from Caledon attended and proposed that Caledon have an official rugby club under the union. One of which is the Club Registrar and Coach/Alumni today, Elizabeth Coulter.

Todd Russell from the Toronto Rugby Union had high hopes for this idea and became their coach. Fielding a senior women's and men's team, the women's team won the Toronto Rugby Union B League Championship under Russell in 2003 and also most notably fielded undefeated teams in 2005 and 2006.

But by 2008, the dream of continuing a rugby club in the town died. The club disbanded and any chance at senior rugby was left for other towns to reap the rewards. It is speculated that the club being strictly senior had something to do with the fallout and many of the founding team had moved on.

In 2004, Bolton resident Mike Iacovelli emigrated to Canada from the United Kingdom with his family. Iacovelli played rugby in his youth and his three sons love the sport. For years, he would travel over two hours multiple times a week just to play with the Markham Irish.

?I reached out to Rugby Ontario back then. I talked to them about a club in the area they considered around Orangeville. But when I told them about Caledon, the guy I was speaking to thought it was a great idea,? Iacovelli said.

Leaving that conversation open-ended and on the backburner for many years, this past year through COVID, Iacovelli joined the Aurora Barbarians for a season. He coached the U12 group while his boys played as well. A shorter drive than Markham. And he noticed something remarkable.

?I've participated with all the other clubs in our horseshoe area so to speak and I've seen the exposure it can generate for the town and how much good it can do. Because, I've been to Fergus, I've been to Oakville, Brock, Georgian Bay, Barrie, and tournaments in Ottawa? Iacovelli explained.

?When you got three, 400 kids showing up to play a few tournaments it's amazing to see. It's a cool sight and the fact the town is getting extra exposure for it makes it more of a community thing. I thought Bolton-Caledon could use some of that.?

Announced officially by Rugby Ontario last month, it officially acknowledged the Caledon Cavaliers as an official club once again. Iacovelli became President of this project.

This time, the club will not be strictly for seniors. Iacovelli and the rest of the club's executive board currently there have introduced this club from the grassroots level all the way up to the senior level.

The goal is to get everyone involved and to expose rugby to everyone from a young age. As of right now, the club is running a Rookie Rugby Program for the youth until December 11.