Synchro Swim

NATIONAL JUNIOR TEAMER: Oakville's Tess Kruspe (second from right) was recently named to the Canadian national junior team that will compete at the 2011 U.A.N.A. Synchronized Swimming Pan American Championships Aug. 17-21 in Montreal. Kruspe, who won silver in duet female and bronze in team female at the Canada Winter Games earlier this year, is one of four Ontario residents on the 12-member squad.

Oakville Soccer Club adds to coaching depth

Canadian men's national under-20 team coaching member Rafael Carbajal will become the Oakville Soccer Club's new Coaching Development Manager next week.

Carbajal joins the OSC with 20 years of extensive coaching experience in hands-on coaching and coach development at youth and senior levels in Canada and internationally. His resume includes holding UEFA A and USSF A coaching licenses.

Most recently, Carbajal coached Milltown FC to a fourth-place finish in its inaugural season in the Canadian Soccer League. He has also held professional head coaching positions with the Serbia White Eagles, North York Astros and AC Milan Soccer Academy Canada, was a goalkeeper coach with the Scarborough Astros, coached professionally in Italy and was in charge of youth development in Uruguay.

"I am very excited about meeting all the club's coaches to outline how we will be moving forward," said Carbajal. "CAO Paul Varian and technical director Jason deVos have laid out an ambitious vision for OSC, which I support fully. I look forward to using all my experience to ensure that OSC coaches and players will be on par with the rest of the world. It will take some time, but it can and will be done.

"Our goal is to develop disciplined athletes who are highly technical and also savvy from a tactical standpoint," he added. "Most of all, we want to help nurture a passion and respect for the sport in all of our players. I am specifically looking forward to working with the people who volunteer to coach at the house league level. They are the first coach most young players will have and we want to be sure that they can help deliver a wonderful soccer experience."

DeVos said he will work closely with Carbajal to develop coaches from house league through rep by using targeted training and mentoring programs as well as online resources.

"Having him on board is quite a coup," deVos said. "Rafael has the passion and depth of experience to help coaches really teach the game in a positive way that is essential to his role."

Varian added, "OSC's mandate to advance every player starts with giving our dedicated volunteer coaches a coaching education that is second to none. Hiring Rafael is an important and progressive investment in a professional coaching structure that provides clear accountability and support for each and every coach."

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Blades start season Sept. 13 in Buffalo

The Oakville Blades' quest to make an appearance in a record fifth consecutive Ontario Junior Hockey League championship series will begin Sept. 13 in Buffalo.

The OJHL released its regular-season schedule this week for the 2011-12 campaign. The Blades will play 49 games during the regular season, beginning with the visit to Buffalo and concluding with a Feb. 11 contest in Burlington.

Oakville's first home game of 2011-12 is slated for Sept. 16, when the Blades will host the Georgetown Raiders at Sixteen Mile Sports Complex.

The league also announced several changes and initiatives that will take place next season. Most notably, the league has reduced its number of teams from 31 to 27, while the Mississauga Chargers — who formerly played in the West Division, where Oakville still resides — and Pickering Panthers have been realigned to the South Division.

Other notable motions that were passed at the league's recent annual general meeting include a new waiver system for player movement; a code of conduct for all general managers, coaches and players; researching the possibility of a three-point scoring system in the standings; the formation of an awards committee to determine year-end award winners; and the creation of seven new league awards.

The waiver system, designed to keep the league's top players in the OJHL, will require all players to be waved through the league before their rights can be traded outside of the OJHL to a competing league.

The three-point scoring system that will be considered features three points for a regulation time win, two points for an overtime or shootout win, and one point for an overtime or shootout loss. The scoring system will not be implemented this season, however.

The OJHL also announced that league-wide attendance in 2010-11 increased 9.5 per cent in the regular season and 41 per cent during the playoffs.