

■ **HORSE RACING:** Dan Girardi picking post positions for second crown of Canadian triple crown

Welland NHLer selected drawmaster for Prince of Wales

BERND FRANKE
Tribune Staff

FORT ERIE — New York Rangers defenceman Dan Girardi will spend one afternoon of the NHL off-season walking in his head coach's shoes.

Like John Tortorella, Girardi will be responsible for filling out the starting lineup. However, the 27-year-old Welland native will need more time for the job.

Since Hendrik Lundqvist is almost certain to start in net for the Rangers, Tortorella only needs to select the three forwards and two rearguards who will be on the ice for the opening faceoff.

As the drawmaster for the 76th running of the Prince of Wales of Stakes at Fort Erie Race Track, Girardi will be picking the post positions for as many as 12 thoroughbreds for the second jewel in Canadian horse racing's triple crown.

With the \$500,000 stakes race normally attracting a smaller field than the Queen's Plate, which started 17 contenders this year, the track's manager of



Girardi

media and marketing doesn't expect Girardi will be too busy at next Wednesday afternoon's post-position draw.

"Fields have ranged from seven to 10, which was one of the biggest in years," Elissa Blowe said.

"Besides, we can only start a maximum of 12 horses."

She also said the wait for a triple crown winner on this side of the border will have to go on for at least another year. It has already been confirmed that Queen's Plate winner Inglorious won't be coming to Fort Erie to try her luck on the track's turf racing surface.

A Plate winner not racing in

the Prince of Wales is not "that unusual," according to Blowe.

"Because there's no bonus (for winning the triple crown), there's not as much of an attraction as there would be in the States."

Canadian horse racing's triple crown — Queen's Plate, at Woodbine in Toronto; Prince of Wales Stakes and Breeders Stakes, also at Woodbine — are each contested on different racing surfaces.

After some of the top thoroughbreds in the country compete on polytrack for the Plate, their owners can enter them in the Prince of Wales, on turf; and the Breeders Stakes, which is run on grass.

"Some owners think it's too much to run on three surfaces," she said.

The size of this year's field won't be known until breezing — essentially, an easy morning workout to determine a horse's readiness — is completed this weekend.

Among the horses who is scheduled to breeze is Hippolytus, the second-place finisher at the Queen's Plate. The colt is usually ridden by Tyler Pizzaro, whose father Jorge was a longtime regular rider at Fort Erie.

"If Hippolytus enters the Prince of Wales, he should be the early favourite," Blowe

suggested.

Girardi was chosen as drawmaster because of his prominence as a pro athlete entering his sixth NHL season and strong ties to the region.

"He's from Welland and he lives in Niagara Falls. He's a good ambassador for Niagara," Blowe said in announcing Girardi's selection as drawmaster.

Last year Girardi appeared in 80 regular season games for the Blueshirts. He scored four goals and added 27 assists for 31 points and finished his fifth season in New York with a plus-7.

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■ **SURFING:** Great Lakes have attracted waves of surfers for many years

Hangin' 10 on Lake Erie

DAVE JOHNSON
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PORT COLBORNE — Wind, waves and sun: perfect conditions for learning how to surf.

Perfect conditions for Mike Sandusky of Surf Ontario to teach Holly Doucette, Laura Pomeroy and Alyssa Doherty how to pick a wave, get up on a board and ride the wave. He was teaching the three women on Wyldewood Beach, one of the many places he can be found enjoying the sport when the weather is right.

"Depending on the weather, I could be on Lake Huron, Lake Ontario or Lake Erie," he said from the beach at the end of Wyldewood Rd. recently.

Sandusky has been surfing for 11 years and besides hitting the Great Lakes, he's surfed Australia, New Zealand, California, Fiji, India as well as along the east coast of Canada.

"I spent some time in Hawaii, too."

While the east coast of Canada has grown in popularity and the other places he's surfed are some of the top spots in the world. Sandusky said people think he's crazy when he tells them he surfs the Great Lakes.

But surfing has been taking place on the Great Lakes — around Port Colborne and Sherkston, Burlington, to name a few places in Canada and across the border on Lake Superior and around Cleveland in the United States — for years. The Wyldewood Surf Club was founded nearly 40 years ago and

“The waves on the lake are short, there's only five or six seconds between them; on the ocean, it can be between eight and 12 seconds between waves.”

Surfing instructor Mike Sandusky

has members from both Canada and the United States, who surf the waters around Buffalo, Niagara and Hamilton.

An advantage of the Great Lakes to Sandusky is the fact he can surf all year around and be close to his shop in Vaughan and close to home.

"It makes it a challenge." His students were up to that challenge as they took to the waves off of Wyldewood Beach.

It wasn't Doucette's first time surfing, but it was the Vineland woman's first attempt to master the waves on one of the Great Lakes.

"I've been surfing before, once in Spain and once in B.C. I'm still a beginner."

She said learning to surf is a challenge but felt she was progressing. Pomeroy, who is from Oakville, surfed once before in Hamilton. She and Doucette were both learning at the same time. As they were in the water, Sandusky would have them get on their boards and then hold one of their boards until just the right wave came along.

The women would then paddle with their hands as the wave took them along, they then got up on the board and rode the wave for as long as they could. While both went down quickly

"The waves on the lakes are short, there's only five or six seconds between them, on the ocean it can be between eight and 12 seconds between waves."

The shorter period between waves on the lakes means less time for a surfer to get set for a wave.

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"Lake Ontario doesn't usually freeze over. I've surfed in the winter before. I just wear a thicker suit that has a hood and wear thick gloves and boots."

The conditions in which he was teaching recently didn't require a thick suit. It was a warm day, with just the right amount of wind coming off Lake Erie for him to teach. The waves weren't too big and the surf wasn't too choppy for the students.

Sandusky, who graduated with a degree in commerce from the University of Guelph, said there is a difference between the waves on the Great Lakes and those of the various oceans. The difference is not much more than a couple of seconds, but those seconds do matter.



DAVE JOHNSON Staff Photos

In top photo, instructor Mike Sandusky gets hits by a wave as he teaches student Holly Doucette off of Wyldewood Beach recently. In photo at left, Alyssa Doherty of Ridgeway pops out of the water after falling off her surfboard.

Surf Ontario in 2002, teaches standup paddleboarding. Standup paddleboards are long surfboards that a person stands on and uses a paddle to move the board.

While Sandusky has used longer surfboards to ride waves, he said shorter boards, those around six feet in length, are easier for surfers to catch the waves and easier to learn on.

For more information, see Sandusky's website at www.surf-ontario.ca.

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in some waves, other waves they rode almost to shore.

"It's so pure. You don't need anything but a board and nature's power," Pomeroy said of surfing.

Also feeling nature's power was Alyssa Doherty of Ridgeway. It was her second time taking

lessons with Sandusky. She took up surfing to give her something else to do in the summer.

"A lot of people don't realize what the lake has to offer," she said, adding she was enjoying the lessons.

Besides teaching people how to surf, Sandusky, who opened

■ **CHARITY:** Fifth annual tournament at Riverview Golf Course benefits Guatemala

Golfers pump up Wells of Hope

WAYNE CAMPBELL
Tribune Staff

PELHAM — Wells of Hope hopes a round of golf will round out fundraising for its Build For Hope.

The Niagara-based charity, which drills wells in Guatemala to bring clean water to poverty-stricken mountain communities, will hold its fifth annual golf tournament at Riverview Golf Course on Saturday, July 16.

With enough golfers paying a \$125 fee, it will trim costs involved in building a house in Fenwick, Wells of Hope director Ben Obdeyn said.

The upscale home in Fenwick's Cherry Ridge subdivision is going up with mostly donated labour and materials from Niagara construction industry builders and suppliers.

"We still have hard costs to cover in the house," Obdeyn said

about the Fenwick project.

Money from the sale of the \$400,000 home will pay down the last part of a \$1.5-million, custom-made drilling rig and truck. It is being used in Guatemala to drill wells and supply clean water to thousands living in poor villages.

The new wells and pipe infrastructure to deliver water to villages frees women and children from a time-consuming chore. They now walk hours to and from polluted streams to get water for use at home.

Obdeyn said in addition to improving health by providing clean water, the wells also free time for children to attend school and for women to develop small businesses. In turn that improves the economic health of the families.

By paying off the rig, Wells of Hope can direct funds to community development projects

such as wells, schools, cooking stoves and medical centre.

Entry fees for the golf tournament will cover green fees, cart, food and prizes. The event will include a silent auction.

Registration is at 11:30 a.m., sausage lunch from the Country Corner Market at 12:30 p.m., tee time 1:30 p.m. and steak dinner follows the 18-hole round.

"The fundraising event helps the Wells of Hope to continue to respond to the cries of the poor," Obdeyn said.

In the fall on Friday, Nov. 11, Wells of Hope, in co-operation with the Shaw Festival Theatre, will hold a concert with Canadian singer-songwriter Jann Arden.

For more information, about the golf tournament see www.wellssofhope.com or e-mail water@wellssofhope.com

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WAYNE CAMPBELL Staff Photo

Wells of Hope director Ben Obdeyn carries lumber at the Build for Hope site in Fenwick. The Niagara-based charity, with help from the local construction industry, is building a house that it will sell to help pay for a water drilling rig and truck the organization uses to drill wells in Guatemala.