

sport **rebecca tsui**



Did you know? Arsenal have won 13 First Division and Premier League titles and 10 FA Cups

Baseball unites youth from around the city

Parents provide encouragement for young players

Every Saturday morning, a group of teenagers and their parents brave the cold weather to practise baseball in a remote field in Shek Kip Mei. To them, baseball is more than a sport.

They are members of the Central and Western Baseball Club (CWBC), and are encouraged by their parents to take part in the sport.

As the youngsters display their talents on the field, the adults play an active role on the sidelines, giving the players coaching tips and other forms of assistance.

CWBC comprises 15 players aged six to 11. They attend nine different schools and speak different languages, including English, Cantonese,

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Japanese and German. They may come from different backgrounds, but they have been brought together by their love for one thing – baseball.

Jo Jo Tam is the only girl in the team. Jo Jo, who is also the only player from a local school, said she is happy to be part of the squad.

“I don’t find it odd to be the only girl,” she said.

Jo Jo’s English is weaker

compared to the other students, who attend international schools.

At the beginning, she was too shy to speak up, but now she does not have any problems communicating with her teammates.

In December, the club organised a fund-raising event called “Bat for Charity”.

The organisers raised HK\$26,813 from the activity. The money was donated to Changing Young Lives Foundation, a charity which helps children in Hong Kong and on the mainland.

The young baseball players asked for a donation for each hit they made. Brian Cochran, from Japanese International School, topped the number of hits with 25. “I love baseball and I love hitting! I’ve been playing this game for two years,” he said.

“I found this team very special because I really like the atmosphere. No matter whether it is competition or practice, people from the club always cheer us on and I love the support we get.”

The Hong Kong Little League season runs from September until March.

Those interested in joining CWBC for the 2009/10 season can visit cwbaseball.org.hk



THE YOUNGSTERS HAVE BEEN BROUGHT TOGETHER BY THEIR LOVE OF BASEBALL. PHOTO: CWBC

Bird's-eye view



Kalle Keituri of Finland soars through the air during the FIS World Cup ski jumping competition held in Sapporo, northern Japan, last Saturday. Keituri placed fourth in the event with 193.3 points.

Photo: European Pressphoto Agency

Arsenal hope Russian star can give them a lift

English soccer giants Arsenal have high hopes for their new Russian star, Andrei Arshavin. Arshavin was signed from Zenit St Petersburg on Tuesday.

Arsenal are hoping he can boost the club back into the top four in the Premier League and a berth in next season’s European Champions League.

The 27-year-old attacking midfielder was one of the stars of Euro 2008 after helping Zenit win last season’s Uefa Cup.

“It was very hard days for me but now it doesn’t matter,” Arshavin said as he stood outside the Emirates Stadium in London. He proudly held an Arsenal No. 23 shirt with his name on it.

“I’m a Gunner. I’m happy to be at Arsenal. I like Arsenal’s style. I like Arsene Wenger as a coach. I like some of the players from this team,” he added.

Arsenal said Arshavin signed a long-term contract but the fee was not disclosed. Zenit said the



ARSENAL'S ANDREI ARSHAVIN

player had signed a three-year deal and the transfer fee was around £15 million (HK\$166 million).

“He is a player I have admired for a long time,” Wenger said. “He is a versatile player with great experience, who will add real quality to our squad.”

Arshavin is not eligible for Champions League games with Arsenal this spring, having played for Zenit in the first round. Arsenal are due to host

AS Roma in the first leg of the second round on February 24.

Arshavin is also unlikely to play against north London neighbours Tottenham in the Premier League on Sunday. He has been idle since the Russian season finished in November.

Arsenal are fifth in the Premier League, 10 points behind first-place Manchester United and five points behind third-place Chelsea and fourth-place Aston Villa.

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