

Stafford named Community Torchbearer for Pan Am Games



By Brock Weir

Bruce Stafford is a man who bristles just a little bit in the limelight.

He's content to be in the background, letting the athletes he coaches have their moment to shine.

This summer, however, all eyes will be on him as he carries the torch for the Pan-Am Games through Aurora.

Mr. Stafford, founder and coach of Storm Volleyball was named Aurora's Community Torchbearer on Tuesday morning. In a statement, Mayor Geoff Dawe hailed Mr. Stafford's long-time involvement in community sport.

"As a member of the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame, recognized for his decades of community volunteering and coaching, Bruce Stafford is an excellent choice to represent Aurora as community torchbearer during the Pan Am Torch Relay," he said. "Bruce has been synonymous with organized volleyball here in Aurora since the 1990s. As a mentor and coach to countless amateur athletes, he is a tremendous role model for youth and an excellent ambassador for sport in our community."

Mr. Stafford will have torch in hand as the route makes its way through Aurora on Thursday, June 25, where it will form part of the centrepiece of a community celebration at Lambert Willson Park, the details for which will be announced closer to the day.

"I was obviously honoured and excited to have the opportunity [and] it is a little bit overwhelming," says Mr. Stafford on receiving this latest honour on top of last year's induction into the Aurora Sport Hall of Fame. "I am more of a person who likes to be in the background rather than the foreground, so all the attention is sometimes a little bit overwhelming."

As his own excitement mounts, so too has his pride in the growth of Storm Volleyball, which has achieved provincial and national recognition. In addition to participating in the Relay, he is also looking forward to his continued involvement shaping sports in this community, including participating in promoting sport tourism, the development of Aurora's Sport Plan, and making Aurora a Canadian Sport 4 Life community.

"It is really exciting to be an Auroran at this time," he said. "To get the opportunity to do this in the Year of Sport and the Pan AM Games is a big deal."

The Pan Am Torch Relay begins May 30 and winds its way through Ontario until the Opening Ceremony in Toronto on July 10.