METRO
March 27, 2010

LEARNING CURVE SPECIAL FEATURE, PGS 11-17

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UFC 115, city face final decision

WESTON STEELE for Metro Vancouver

MMA UFC 115 in Vancouver may have been dealt a knockout blow, apparently because the city and the mixed martial arts organization have yet to resolve insurance-related issues.

After rumours of a possible cancellation, UFC president Dana White reportedly told sportsnet.ca yesterday that the June 12 event has been moved to Cincinnati. No official announcement has been made.

Paul Lazenby, a former fighter and advocate for mixed martial arts, said that the Vancouver Athletic Commission pushed to have the event go through, but the city's licensing and animal control division held up the process.

"They basically continued to express legal concerns without offering any solution," said Lazenby. "We keep asking them 'what do you need?' and they keep telling us what we don't have."

Lazenby said the licensing office had asked the UFC for higher levels of insurance and medical testing than it ever had to obtain in any other city. These "roadblocks" were thrown in, said Lazenby, because nobody wanted to say a definite "no" but instead, stall the process until it was too late.

In December, Vancouver City Council had voted 6-3 to approve a two-year trial period for MMA, but several issues remained unresolved.

Shane Carwin, top, takes on Frank Mir at UFC 111 in New Jersey last weekend.

Mehrdad Rahbar with one of his paintings on display at the Café for Contemporary Art in North Vancouver yesterday. Rahbar is the organizer of the Norooz Arts Variety Show, which displays works of art prohibited in Iran.

Fiancé of slain Iranian

Abbotsford Heat coach's fit goes viral

HOCKEY Video of Abbotsford Heat Coach Jim Playfair going ballistic during Saturday's match against the Hamilton Bulldogs has gone viral and has been viewed more than 200,000 times on YouTube.

The former Calgary Flames coach smashed two sticks over the boards and then ripped off his jacket while he stood on the boards and screamed obscenities at a referee.

In a statement, the Abbotsford Heat said Playfair was fined an undisclosed amount and would be back behind the bench for yesterday's tilt versus the Manitoba Moose.

The outburst occurred after Heat forward J.D. Watt was assessed a five-minute charging penalty and game misconduct for colliding with the Hamilton goaltender.

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Stem cell drive attracts thousands

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RICHMOND An unprecedented number of people — 4,025, to be exact — signed up as donors with Canada's national stem cell and bone marrow network as part of a campaign to attract Chinese registrants.

OneMatch, a division of Canadian Blood Services, held the drive at Aberdeen Centre in Richmond in conjunction with another event in Toronto on Saturday.

Chinese blood cancer patients have a 10 per cent chance of finding a stem cell donor because only two per cent of Canadians signed up with the registry are Chinese.

"It was really historic," Sue Smith, executive director of OneMatch, said of the number of new registrants.

"The ultimate goal (was) 1,500 to 2,000, so this just blew the roof off things."

She said having a speaker representing the face of the cause, like Ryan Chu — whose story ran in Metro Vancouver on March 25 — also helped.

"It is our hope that this particular drive becomes an annual one," Smith said.

"Get a swab kit in the mail and ... this will truly make a difference."

PHOTO COURTESY OF ONEMATCH

People line up at Richmond's Aberdeen Centre on Saturday for OneMatch's stem cell drive.

Online

- For more information, visit www.onematch.ca.

Tax tantrum causes more than $10K in damages

OFFICE Apparently unhappy over a past tax return, a man entered an H&R Block on Commercial Drive and allegedly began screaming at staff and tossing computers — at one point he even tried smashing the company's sign through the office's plate-glass window.

Vancouver police Const. Lindsey Houghton said no one was injured, but damages to the office were estimated at more than $10,000.

"Income tax time can be stressful to some people," said Houghton.

The 52-year-old Vancouver man was apparently unhappy over an error he had found in a past return that was filed at a different tax preparation office.

He entered the office, located in the 2000 block of Commercial Drive, around 1 p.m. Sunday and confronted staff.

It's alleged that, at one point, he flew into a rage and began throwing furniture and ripping computers and monitors from desks.

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