

# Sports job website is unique to Canada

By JAN DEAN  
Special

For every weekend jock dreaming of working in sports, a Mississauga-based company might be able to make those dreams come true.

Cosmos Sports has just launched [www.canadiansportsjobs.com](http://www.canadiansportsjobs.com), the first and only sports job website in Canada.

The website is the brainchild of Cary Kaplan, former marketing director and then president of the American Hockey League Hamilton Bulldogs.

"There are thousands of jobs in the sports industry," said Kaplan, "and they range from sports media, school athletic programmes, sports camps, fitness clubs, to manufacturing sports equipment and selling to sports therapists. Until now, there has never been one place for employers and applicants to connect. We provide that."

The website posted 15 jobs in its first three days and Kaplan says getting five to 10 new job postings a week will enable the site to build quickly. Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment (owner of the Maple Leafs hockey team) and the Sporting Life chain of sports stores are already posting jobs on the site.

The website is free to job seekers. Employers pay \$175 to post a job, more if they want Cosmos to conduct the preliminary interviews and background checks.

Launched quietly a week ago, the website has already drawn more than 3,000 people to the site and 300 job seekers have signed up. Feedback has been really positive.

"This really appeals to the dream seekers," said Kaplan. "It's for people who grew up playing sports and want to bring that passion to work. There are a lot of people who will take less money and work longer hours to be associated with sports."

Kaplan readily admits his job with the Bulldogs is the job thousands dream about, but at age 32 he decided to do something else with his MBA and started Cosmos Sports a year ago. He has had a lot of help from his wife, Amelia, who works as Cosmos' director of business operations. They met while both were working for the Bulldogs. She was the team's office manager.

Before launching the website, the company organized two conferences in the past year to bring together sports executives and 130 people looking for work in the industry.

The other thing that keeps Kaplan and his 10 employees busy is fan marketing. They help sell tickets for football's Toronto Argonauts and Hamilton Tiger-Cats, baseball's Toronto Blue Jays, Toronto Roadrunners Hockey Club and the Toronto Rock Lacrosse Club.

Selling tickets is the hardest part of running any sports club, but Kaplan says you

don't need a winning team to pack a stadium or arena.

"From a business perspective, blaming low ticket sales on a losing team is a cop out," said Kaplan.

"The Toronto Raptors lose, but they have more fans than the Blue Jays, and that's because they have better sales and marketing."

As far as Kaplan is concerned, team presidents and marketing people worry way too much about winning. His philosophy is to assume the team is going to lose every game and sell tickets anyway.

With a win-loss record of 1-17 last year, the Ti-Cats definitely present a challenge for Kaplan's company.

Locally, the company has already talked to Mario Forgione, co-owner of the Mississauga IceDogs, and is very interested in working with the 'Dogs to stir up fan interest and increase ticket sales.