

Canoe-packing pair thumb ride to regatta

By RALPH ADAMS

Jay Davis and Steve Stesco of Sudbury reached Saturday's paddling regatta at Balmy Beach Canoe Club the hard way.

They left their home city last Thursday to hitchhike to Toronto and it would not have been unreasonable for them to expect to arrive here in time to race in the Western Division regatta burdened only with two paddles and their personal gear.

But they headed out of Sudbury lugging their racing canoe — their hiking thumbs at the ready to flag down a motorist or a soft-hearted truck driver.

They had not gone any great distance when fortune smiled on them. Jack Fraser, a former Toronto Sailing and Canoe Club paddler, was heading south and did a double take when he saw Davie and Stesco lugging their canoe.

Fraser stopped his car and could hardly believe his ears when he heard of the optimistic jaunt the boys planned. Never one to leave a paddler stranded, Fraser helped tie the canoe to the roof of his car and hauled the boys to Toronto. They spent a sleepless Thursday night, stayed in an east-end hotel Friday and were refreshed enough for Stesco to take third place in the Canadian singles juvenile race and Davis to finish fourth in the Canadian singles senior event. Fraser took them home, too.

The five points they won barely made a ripple in the aggregates. Mississauga won the Beaches' 61st regatta with 209 points. Beach finished with 103, West Rouge scored 72, Mohawk 23. The victory gave Mississauga a sweep of the club regattas and left them free to lead the assault next Saturday at Centre Island on qualifying berths in the Canadian championships to be held in Ottawa in August.

Order of finish among women's teams

was Mississauga 28, West Rouge 22, Balmy Beach 15 and Mohawk of Burlington, 8.

The Beach regatta marked the fifth successive program to be raced this season under ideal weather conditions. Even Lake Ontario, which can be mean to paddlers on the Beach course, was calm.

The racing saw Bill Collins' Mississauga war canoes dominate. The Port Credit crew won the mile and 1,500-metre races by wide margins. Mississauga's Gabor Joo won the kayak singles with impressive ease and joined Mark Butler in the tandem to make this twosome appear sure point-winners come championship time. Joo, until this year, had paddled for the Toronto Canoe Club.

Bill Pitt, who joined Mississauga this season after earlier wearing Sudbury and Mohawk colors, was off to a bad training start this season, suffering from a broken ankle. Pitt, though, mended quickly, has cast aside his crutches and has whittled his weight to 165 pounds. With nothing in his division to keep him from the championships, he hopes to race for the Canadian title at 160 pounds. He was an easy Canadian singles winner at Balmy Beach.

Inspiring hope for seasons to come in a challenge to the Mississauga throttle-hold on division honors are ranks of young paddlers. Beaches' George Stewart showed promise of winning the Canadian singles juvenile race. Bob Abbot of West Rouge won the junior kayak singles. Dave Eade, wearing Beach colors, won the Canadian singles bantam race.

West Rouge's Canadian four that won the CCA juvenile title last year and won the junior class Saturday, comprised J. Mackeracher, W. Schlombs, J. Gomes and B. Hobbs.