

VANCOUVER

Jays' 'A' team in good hands with Takefman

Mike Cohen

QUEBEC BUREAU CHIEF

When the *Jewish Tribune* last visited the home of the short-season rookie 'A' class Vancouver Canadians professional baseball team five years ago, former Montrealer Jason Takefman was the head of ticket sales. Since that time he has been promoted to the post of general manager while the team itself became an affiliate of the Toronto Blue Jays.

"I am not a title guy, but I guess being GM is pretty cool," Takefman said between innings of a recent game. "When the job became vacant in 2009 I approached our team president and told him I really wanted the job. A month later it was mine."

Being the GM of a minor league club is not like the big leagues, where trades are made.

"I oversee day-to-day opera-

tions of the club," he said. "This includes immigration issues with our roster, legal matters. From the time I joined the organization in 2006 I have spent a lot of time working on community relations. It is so important for us to connect with the people and promoting the product."

The Canadians are a real hit in Vancouver. They have had a number of sellouts this season while averaging more than 4,800 fans per game. It is a 76-game season, crammed into just 80 days plus playoffs. At one time Vancouver had a Triple A team, but that ended in 1999 and they returned at a lower tier.

"Vancouver is a great baseball city," said Takefman, a graduate of Bialik High School in Côte Saint-Luc.

As a Blue Jays minor league affiliate, Takefman stays in close touch with the Toronto organization on player and

management fronts, working to ensure that each player and staff member is handled professionally as they ascend towards the majors.

Takefman, 30, has had some contact with Blue Jays GM Alex Anthopoulos, also a former Montrealer.

In addition to his communication with the Jays, Takefman takes a great deal of pride in developing the front office staff, having already handled the majority of the daily duties over his tenure with the organization.

In Vancouver Takefman sits

on the Jewish Community Centre (JCC) Sports Dinner Committee and is involved with BC Children's Hospital.

"It is important for me to stay connected to the Jewish community and the sports dinner does that for me."

Alex Dachis, the team's coor-

dinator of sales and community relations, is also Jewish and works closely with Takefman.

Everything is sponsored at a Canadians game, from the cement company, which supports a kids' play area, to a kiss camera feature on the Jumbotron scoreboard brought to you by The Keg.

Dachis oversees a program whereby companies buy a bulk of tickets and get an all-you-can-eat opportunity in a picnic area along the first base-line beginning one hour before game time, topped off with a dessert at 8 p.m.

"These promos start selling out in December," he said, underlining the busy off-season that takes place.

For more information about the team log on to www.canadiansbaseball.com.

See our video interview with Takefman at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g4aK-p7NiDU>.

VANCOUVER

Jewish pitcher hopes to earn a berth with Jays

Mike Cohen

QUEBEC BUREAU CHIEF

The Toronto Blue Jays already had a significant Jewish connection with their short season rookie 'A' ball affiliate Vancouver Canadians, with native Montrealer Jason Takefman at the helm as general manager. In July that went up a degree when 2013 draft choice Scott Silverstein, 23, a six-foot-five, 250-pound, left-handed pitcher from Brookeville, MD, was assigned to the club.

Silverstein was a 25th round pick in the Major League Baseball Draft in June. He compiled a 10-2 record in his redshirt senior season at the University of Virginia, finishing with a 3.15 ERA.

In an interview with the *Jewish Tribune* after a recent game at the picturesque Scotiabank Field at Nat Bailey Stadium, Silverstein spoke proudly

about his Jewish heritage and of one day suiting up for the Blue Jays.

"I had my bar mitzvah at the Western Wall in Jerusalem," Silverstein said. "It was a tremendous experience for me."

While Silverstein was a starter in college, it appears that his future for now will likely be in the bullpen as a relief pitcher.

"I will do whatever it takes to



Toronto Blue Jays rookie 'A' team in BC, the Vancouver Canadians, is led by GM Jason Takefman (left), who worked his way up in the organization. With him is left-handed pitcher Scott Silverstein, a 2013 draft choice hoping to make it to The Show in Toronto.

move up," he said. "Starting, closing, cleaning the bathrooms.... I don't care. I just want to pursue my dream of getting to the big leagues."

"I throw a fastball, slider and a changeup," Silverstein noted. "It depends upon the day, really. Trying to keep the hitter

off balance is the main goal."

While already very much at home in Vancouver, Silverstein says he is following the Blue Jays very closely.

"In Vancouver all you get is Blue Jays coverage," he said. "I guess I have a new favourite team. In the meantime, Van-

cover is an awesome city. The fans here every night are incredible. It is a big league city."

See our video interview with Silverstein at <http://www.jewishtribune.ca/sports/2013/08/01/toronto-blue-jays-prospect-scott-silverstein>.

Peres Center rejects play because of one line

JERUSALEM (JNS.org) – The Peres Center for Peace decided not to include the play *Snow Ball* in its program for the visit of the Barcelona soccer team in Israel, because the play includes the line that "the state of Israel is the national home of all Jews." The affair began this April when the new play, directed by Roy Horovitz, was performed as part of the Haifa International Children's Theatre Festival. The play is based on an original Israeli script that tells the story of Felipe, a 10-year-old new im-

migrant to Israel from Argentina who is a huge fan of FC Barcelona star Lionel Messi. After learning that FC Barcelona was coming to Israel, Sherry Aryeh, artistic director of the Israel Children and Youth Social Theatre, which produced the play, approached the Peres Center for Peace with the suggestion of performing the play during Messi's visit to Israel. She suggested the theater perform a festive rendition of the play with the Argentinian star, while Jewish and Palestinian children watched it to-

gether. Initially, the Peres Center was very enthusiastic about the initiative. They sent staff members to watch the play and indicated that they were favourably impressed. But much to the theatre's surprise, the Peres Center ultimately nixed the play, via a letter written by Dvir Zivan, the manager of the Peres Center's sports department. The email, which was obtained by Israel Hayom, says, "We would be happy to bring all the Jewish children to the play, but there is a problem. We do not do activities

intended for one nationality only. It is hard for us to bring Palestinian children to a play that uses the words 'Jewish state.' Unfortunately, we will be unable to cooperate on this venture."

Snow Ball director Horovitz said, "What is particularly outrageous is the argument they gave. It's sad to discover that in a centre that carries the name of the president of the state of Israel there are those who believe that identifying Israel as the Jewish state is a problematic statement."

Yiddish language classes offered

MONTREAL – Yiddish Beginners' & Intermediate Language Classes will start in September at the Jewish Public Library, 5151 Côte Ste-Catherine Rd. in Montreal. Beginners' Yiddish will be held Sept. 10, 17, 24 and Oct. 1. from 7 p.m. to 8:45 p.m. Intermediate Yiddish begins Oct. 8. from 7 p.m. to 8:45 p.m. for 8 sessions. Advanced Yiddish begins Sept. 10, 2013 from 7 p.m. to 8:45 p.m. for 12 sessions.

To register and for more information, call (514) 345-2627 ext. 3006 or visit www.jewishpubliclibrary.org.



Rejected play, *Snow Ball*, a play based on an original Israeli script that tells the story of Felipe, a 10-year-old new immigrant to Israel from Argentina who is a huge fan of FC Barcelona star Lionel Messi (pictured). (Photo: Wikimedia Commons)