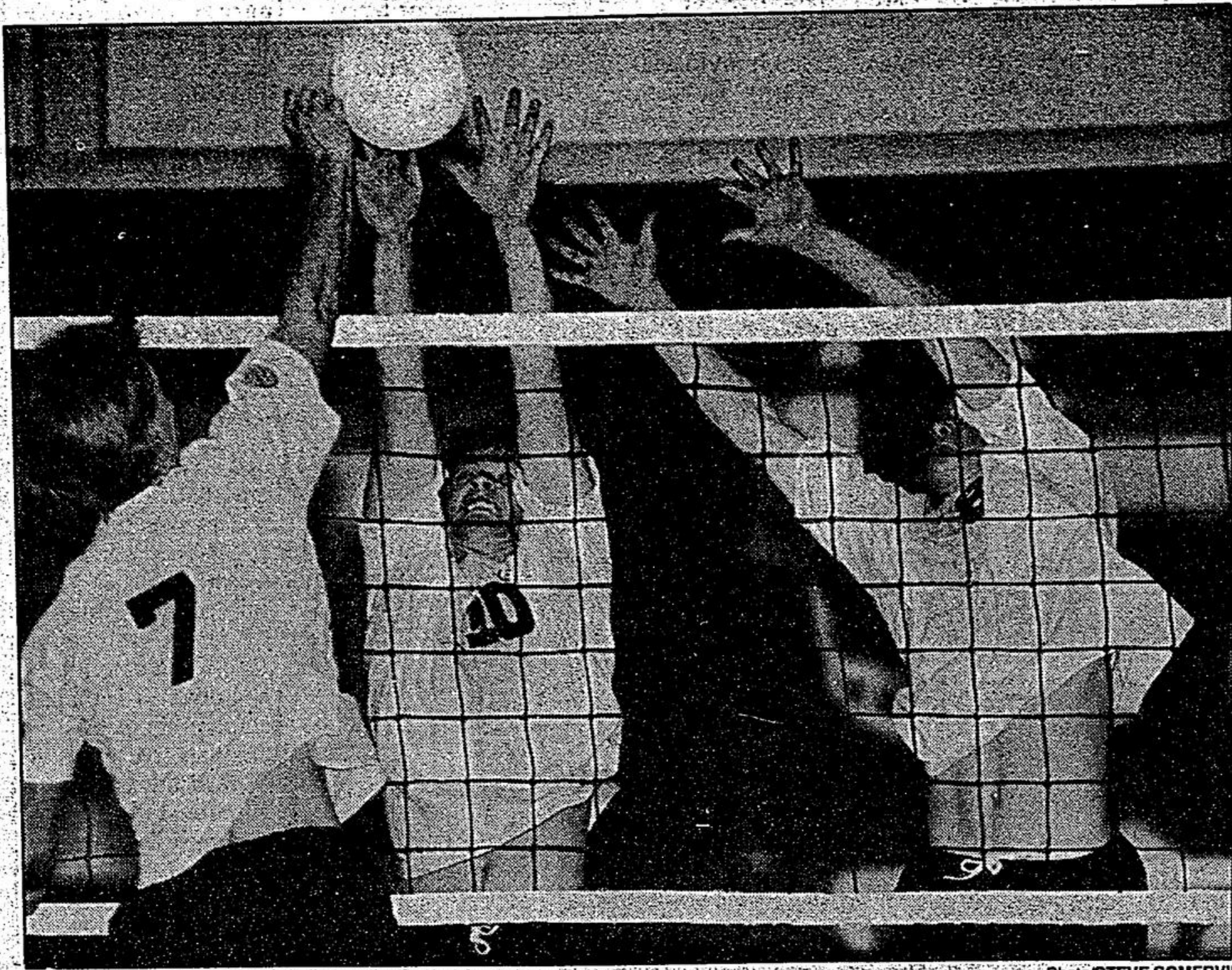


stouffville sports



Photo/STEVE SOMERVILLE

Stouffville District High's Ryan Jefferson (centre), and Mike Green (far right), do their best to block this shot from a Sutton player during

last week's York Region Secondary Schools Athletic Association senior boys' AA volleyball final at Stouffville District High.

Spartans spike two York Region titles

For the first time since 1986, the Stouffville District Secondary School (SDSS) Spartans senior boys' volleyball team has been defeated in the York Region Secondary Schools Athletic Association volleyball AA championships.

The Spartans fell to Sutton D.H.S. in a closely contested three game final Thursday at the SDSS gym.

The Spartans finished first in pool play, defeating the Sutton school in a three game set. The Spartans also downed Middlefield H.S. and Toronto Waldorf H.S. in preliminary play.

But for the SDSS junior and midget Spartans, it was sweet victory as both squads emerged victorious in their respective York AA title tournaments.

The juniors swept their Sutton opponents two straight in Tuesday's York championships, which were played at Sutton D.H.S.

The Spartans took seven of eight games in round robin pool play, downing Sutton, Middlefield, Toronto Waldorf H.S., and Woodbridge H.S.

The win for the heavily favoured Spartans came as

no surprise to co-coach Michele Shannon.

"They've been strong all year," said Shannon. "They did what we expected them to do."

Martin Reesor and Graham Crowder stood out for the Spartans.

The midget Spartans won their regional title Nov. 10 at Middlefield C.I., as they defeated Sutton 15-8, 15-4 in the championship set.

The Spartans and Sutton had split their two games played in the preliminary round.

The SDSS squad swept Woodbridge College, Middlefield, and Toronto Waldorf in three preliminary sets.

Colin Thompson of the Spartans was named tournament MVP based on most points earned in hits and serves, and overall hustle.

Brad Whitelaw and Dan Tardella served well, with Rob Spytz, Chris Karam, and Dave Whitelaw also making a strong contribution to the Spartans' win.

All three SDSS teams will contest their respective Durham-York championships this week.

Midget Spartans hold court

The Stouffville District Secondary School (SDSS) Spartans midget girls' basketball team finished the regular season first out of all AA-rated schools, and second place overall, when they downed Richmond Hill 48-40 on Nov. 9.

Jen Reesor was the leading SDSS scorer in the match with 17 points. Danielle Timms hit for 10 points, with Alison Crowder chipping in with nine points.

Shannon Timms had six points and seven assists.

Stephanie Hobbs was instrumental in the win, heading up the SDSS defensive effort. Jen Reesor, Danielle Timms, and Lillian Boyd also shone on

defence.

The victory allowed the Spartans to finish the schedule with eight wins and just one loss.

The team is to host the YRSAA semi-final contest Nov. 18.

The senior Spartans came up with one of their strongest games of the

season, but fell 62-38 to a powerful Richmond Hill Raiders team the same day.

Andrea Crothers collected 16 points to lead SDSS scorers.

Erin Blenkhorn, Jen McGowan, and Melissa Austin had nine, seven, and six points respectively.

Students try to raise funds

Students from Stouffville District Secondary School (SDSS) take to the streets today to sell oranges and grapefruits for the school's physical education program.

The sales drive is to run through Nov. 25, with the fruit scheduled to arrive at the school Monday, Dec. 13.

Final day for pickup is Dec. 17.

The fruit sale is to be the only door-to-door campaign undertaken by SDSS students this school year.

Spartans hope seven is a lucky number

SPORT NOTES

bruce stapley



the grandfather of the Spartan's Ryan Jefferson, resulting in Ryan's being summoned by family during the championship final, and you have the difference.

For the likes of Spartans Mike Green, Jamie Sheraton, Kevin Morreau, and Darrin Zeller, it was perhaps their finest hour, as the Spartans bounced back after a tough 17-15 loss in the first game of the final to win the second match 15-11.

But they ran out of gas in game three, losing 15-6 even though they came back to tie it after falling behind 4-0 early.

Fletcher says the Spartan's exhibition of grit and character made for the team's best performance of the season.

The coach has been optimistic all along, despite the fact he has a team which, realistically, is but a shell of former great Spartan units.

Fellow SDSS coach Rusty Hick put it in perspective during the final when he reminded me that this was supposed to have been a rebuilding year for the senior Spartans.

The future is all but guaranteed, as almost all of this year's team is eligible next year, while both the SDSS midgets and juniors swept to victory in their York championship tournaments last week.

But suddenly, Fletcher is talking miracle finish now. While both YRSAA finalists go on to the DYSSAA event, just one team advances to the big one, the Ontario Federation of Schools Athletic Association playdowns in Ingersoll Nov. 26-27.

"The boys dug down so deep," Fletcher raved after the York finals last week.

He said he's been working his boys extra hard to work on their one noticeable weakness.

"We're going to work on setting, on our back sets to the weak side."

Fletcher is licking his chops at the challenge that lies in front of his boys. His Sutton counterpart acknowledged during the ceremony following Thursday's York final just how far the Spartans have come this season.

The momentum now might just be on the side of tradition, on the side of the players who are determined to carry the torch, and on the side of the coach who has always known what it takes to win at the YRSAA and DYSSAA levels.

Stay tuned.

All signs point north to Sutton D.H.S. for what could be one of the most gripping athletic contests ever to take place in Durham-York Secondary Schools Athletic Association history on Thursday.

In terms of raw talent, any of the Stouffville District Secondary School senior boys' volleyball teams which captured the DYSSAA crown each of the past six years would far overshadow any of this year's quartet of teams contesting the bi-regional crown.

Not this year.

The current edition doesn't have a Don Clearwater, a Karam Amer, a Tim Lavell, or a Brian Snooks, dynamic players who could dominate a game with their power hitting and their ability to return the toughest shots.

In fact, scanning the Spartans' roster this fall, the only familiar face to be found is that of veteran coach Jim Fletcher.

But what this year's outfit does have is unbridled determination, a quality that might just be enough to see them prevail at this week's DYSSAA showdown.

The Spartans also have that valuable commodity known as a winning tradition, gained from playing on championship midget and junior level teams, or from sitting on the bench with last year's senior Spartans.

At last week's York Region (YRSAA) championships at the Stouffville school, the Spartans, playing the unusual role of underdog, came within a few unhealthy players and an untimely tragedy of upsetting the Sutton D.H.S. team, which has set out from day one to knock the SDSS crew off its perch.

The Spartans, who hadn't been able to defeat the Sutton squad all season, downed their rivals in a come from behind three game set in pool play, then ended up losing an extremely hard fought final in three games.

The Spartans might have wound up on top but for the fact that regulars Ryan Burkholder and Matt Brillinger were playing despite illness, while first stringer Dave Giancoulos was missing altogether due to injury.

Add to that the sudden death of