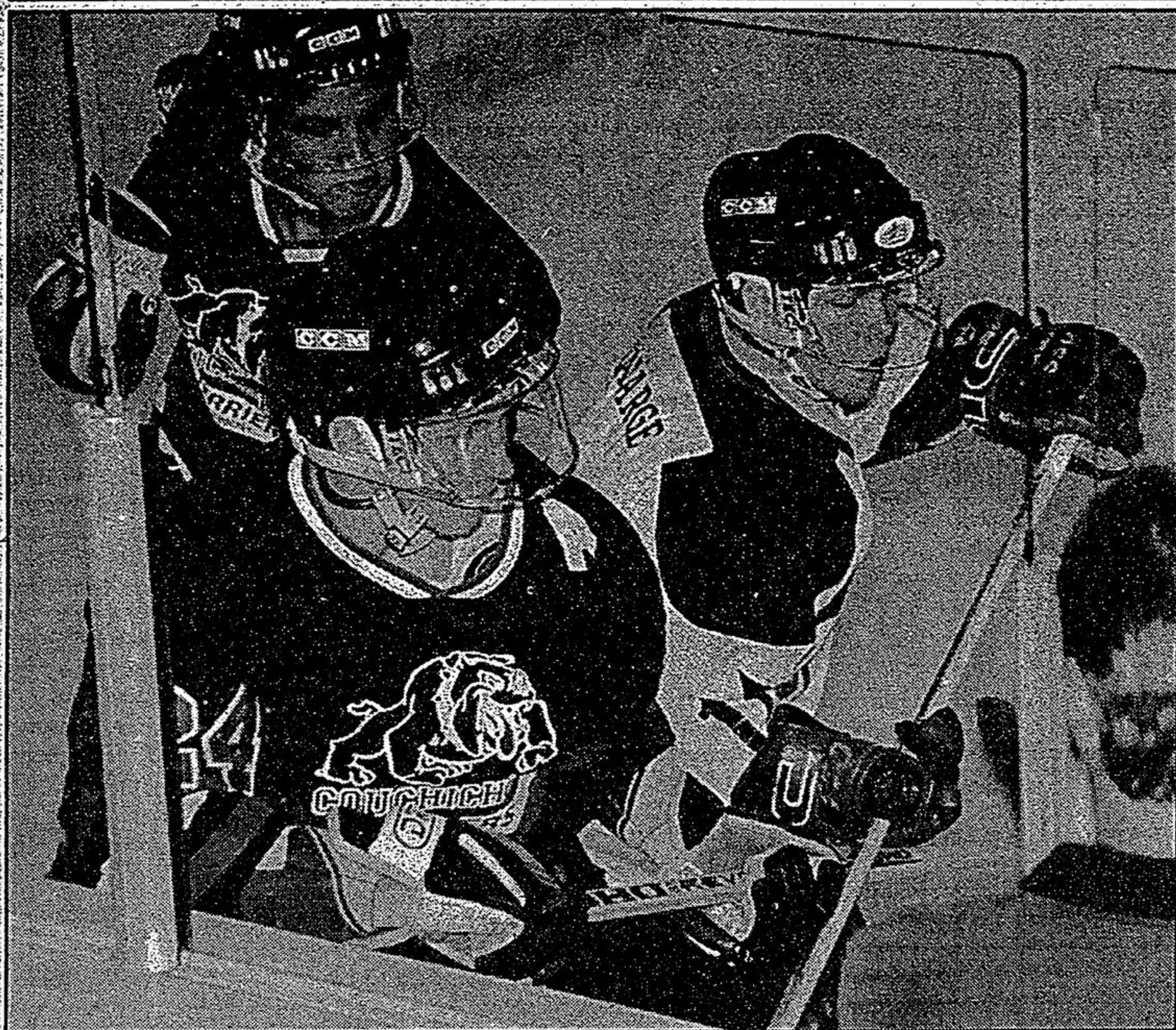


THE TRIBUNE

Sports & Leisure

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CRUNCH TIME: Couchiching Terriers' Aaron Kowalsky (left), gets taken into the boards by Spirit of Stouffville centremen Ed Kerney (right), during first period action in Thursday's Ontario Hockey Association Provincial Junior A Hockey League regular season opener at the Rec Centre. The Spirit of Stouffville prevailed 9-4.

Photo by SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Spirit tame Terriers in regular season opener

BRUCE STAPLEY
Correspondent

The mist from the dry ice machine used for the pre-game player introductions hadn't even settled when the Spirit of Stouffville proved they were up to the challenge of their first test of the new season.

Darcy King's goal, just 12 seconds into Thursday's Provincial Junior A Hockey League opener with the Couchiching Terriers, set the frisky Spirit soaring on their way to a 9-4 victory.

The score actually flattered the visitors, who didn't get their second goal until just past the midway point of the third period when Spirit coach Dan Larmer finally reined in his front liners and gave the reserves a chance to stretch their legs.

The Spirit simply outplayed, out hit and out fought their bewildered opponents, running up a 4-0 first-period lead, then extending the margin to 8-1 after 40 minutes. At one point in the second the Stouffville squad played two men short for a minute and 40 seconds without the Terriers getting one good scoring chance.

Goalkeeper Cory Lloyd played a big part in keeping the Terriers off the board for the first 50 minutes of Thursday's game, making several dazzling saves when called upon.

The Stouffville totals included four power play goals, two scored within seconds of the infraction being called as it became a matter of when, not if they would capitalize with the man advantage.

King led the way with two goals and three assists. Linemate Kevin Edgar was close behind with a pair of markers and two setups, while Geoff Keillor, the third member of the potent line, chipped in with a goal and two helpers. Other scorers were Ed Kearney, Scott Martin, Dave Zelasko and Mark Brus-

King, who said his pace-setting goal from the opening face off fulfilled his desire to score the team's first goal of the season, downplayed his part in the victory.

"I guess I was in the right place at the right time," he said. "It was a nice pass from Edgar (for his first goal). We got some good bounces, they made some mistakes and we took advantage of them."

Spirit head coach Dan Larmer said the result shows that can happen when a team plays the majority of a game in the other team's end.

"Our plan was to shoot the puck into their end and then go banging to get it," he said. "As long as the puck is deep in their end they can't hurt us."

Larmer said while he doesn't expect his team to score nine goals every time out, he will stick to the same plan all season long.

"That's the style we plan to play all year. Some nights we'll score nine goals, other nights we'll only get three. So if we can keep our goals against down we can win."

Larmer wasn't about to let his players get overconfident as a result of the initial win, suggesting his team will encounter stiffer resistance in future games. "We've still got a lot of work to do. It's a 51 game season and the next game starts with a 0-0 score."

Spiritually speaking... The Spirit play the Peterboro Bees today as part of the annual OHA Provincial Junior A Hockey League Prospects Weekend at the Mississauga Ice Complex. They host the Newmarket 87's Hurricane next Thursday in their second game of the season.

The Spirit unveiled their new state-of-the-art red, black and white uniforms for Thursday's game. Mayor Wayne Emmerson was on hand to drop the ceremonial first puck.

Are there no good sports at SDSS?



Sports Notes

Bruce Stapley

You don't know what you've got until you lose it.

That best sums up the situation as the slash and burn approach to education as we once knew it has made the Stouffville Secondary School (SDSS) athletic program its latest victim.

The kids will probably return to the courts and the cross country trails as all hands contribute to resolve the maelstrom brought about by the school board's elimination of the 75-minute administration period formerly enjoyed by SDSS phys ed heads Dave Connell and Sheila Coleman. The crisis will somehow be averted this time.

But this is the second serious disruption to the SDSS athletic program in three years. Undoubtedly, it won't be the last as the old order gives way to the new with its insistence upon fiscal accountability.

Tuesday night's Parent-Teacher Liaison meeting at the school was marked by a mix of confusion, disbelief and anger as everyone tried to figure out what to do next.

Student after student and parent after parent rose to tell how essential the school's well-rounded extra-curricular program was to them.

Zora Chacinski, whose daughter Alex was named SDSS outstanding junior female athlete of the year last spring, was looking for answers.

"My daughter simply isn't going to excel in academics if she can't play sports at school," she lamented. "Tell me what to do."

COMMUNITY HELP NEEDED

Track and field coach Fred Robbins, who will become the model of parental volunteerism as SDSS takes the load off its teacher-coaches, by inviting more and more community assistance, expressed the frustration of parents and students alike.

"There's no convener for track and field for York Region for 1998," railed Robbins. "He's refused to do it. There will be no cross country season this year — it's over in four weeks and it hasn't even started yet."

Robbins lamented how his own daughter, Brenda, who was named SDSS Athletic Council co-chair for 1997-98, attended an Ontario student leadership camp this past summer in preparation for her duties.

"For what?" Fred asked in frustra-

tion. "Phys ed sports at schools is going to disappear," he warned, saying how governments and school boards were "whittling away" at the little things while still expecting the same programs as in the past.

"Our job as parents here tonight is to go out and educate the public," he offered. "They don't know what's going on here."

The divisions in our society in general were evident at the meeting.

While some parents were totally supportive of the teachers' decision to pull the plug on the school's athletic program as a means of showing their frustration, others vented their disapproval, suggesting the teachers should consider it one of their most basic duties to run extra-curricular sports programs.

Some saw parent volunteers as the answer, while others insisted the teachers were the only ones equipped to run a successful school athletic program.

THREE ISSUES AT STAKE

Meanwhile, for Coleman and Connell, long respected for their unflinching commitment to the SDSS athletic program, it all comes down to three issues:

First, that smaller schools like SDSS always get the shaft when the board allocates funding for things like athletic programs.

By granting schools money based strictly on student head count, SDSS is unable to keep up as it tries to field teams in all sports just like the big schools do.

Consequently, you'll find the two phys ed heads counting coins from a special fundraising pop machine before school starts each morning, heading up fruit drives, and co-ordinating hot dog sales at track meets at the Stouffville Track.

Second, the board's cutting of supply teachers leaves a smaller staff like that at SDSS hard pressed to cover when coaches leave the school to take their teams to games.

And thirdly, the cutting of the 75-minute administration period, once again victimizing small schools only.

Coming as it does on the heels of the first two issues, it is the final straw, causing the two heads, along with their supportive fellow teacher-coaches, to pull out altogether from the extra-curricular sports program.

As the year 2000 approaches, one thing is sure. The coming of the new millennium will surely mark the passage of an age where sports at the local high school were as much a sure thing as drab fare at the cafeteria.