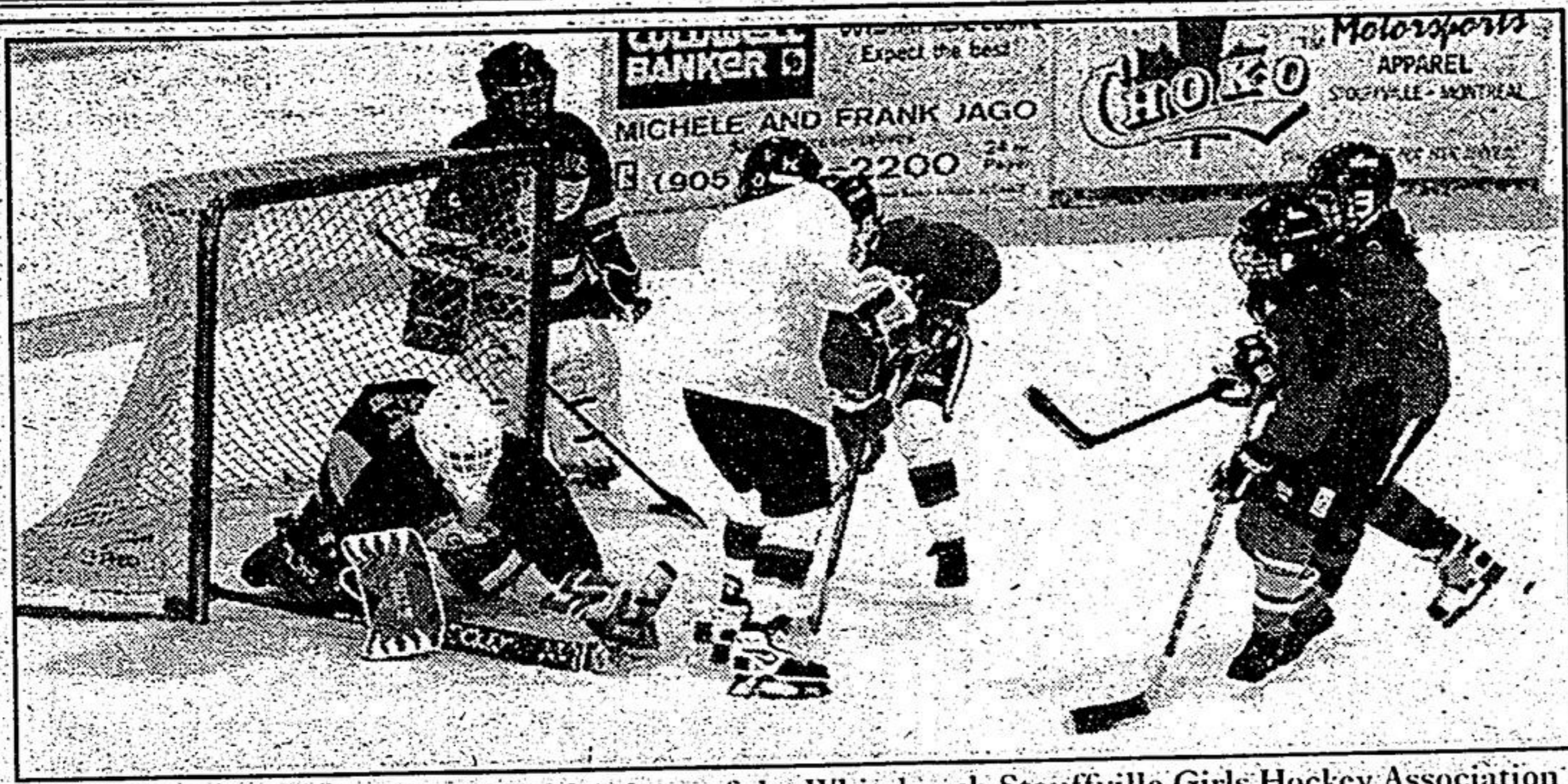


Sports & Leisure

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PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT: Members of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Girls Hockey Association pee-wee girls' hockey club go through a practice session at the Rec Centre on Wednesday. Here, goal-keeper Danielle Paterson goes down in an effort to watch this screen shot. Looking on is goalie Jessica Allen.
Photo by LORI EMERSON

Spirit edges Muskies

Jeff Marshall finally got to play his game Thursday night, and the result was a big plus for the Spirit of Stouffville.

The second year Spirit defenceman scored two power play goals in the first period, and assisted on Darcy King's second period marker with the man advantage, to lead his team to a 3-2 win over the visiting Lindsay Muskies in a tight checking match.

The victory snapped a four game Stouffville losing streak, and put the Spirit within a point of fourth place in the Provincial Junior A Hockey League's six team Phillips Division.

"I'm an offensive defenceman, I like to be the fourth man in the rush," said Marshall after the game. "It seemed

everything came together tonight." Marshall shared the spotlight with Spirit goal keeper Cory Lloyd, who was in top form as the Muskies held a 30-18 advantage in shots on goal. "Cory stood on his head for us, he was outstanding," raved Spirit head coach Dan Larmer.

Lloyd credited his defence for helping keep the Muskies at bay with a physical style of play. "Our defence played really well, there were a lot of blocked shots," said Lloyd.

King and Kevin Edgar assisted on both of Marshall's goals. Geoff Keillor also assisted on King's marker.

The Spirit return home to host Collingwood next Thursday night.
- Bruce Stapley

Connell deserves a little respect

You can understand why Dave Connell feels a little like Joe Carter these days.



Sports Notes

Bruce Stapley

Carter, the home run hero of the Toronto Blue Jays

1993 World Series victory and a leader with the Jays since coming aboard in the early 1990's, was almost booted off the field this past season when his production dropped somewhat, although he still posted stats most ball players would be more than happy with.

Connell has a similar glorious past. A 29-year veteran Stouffville District Secondary School phys.ed teacher, coach and all round go getter and promoter of all causes, he was acknowledged Stouffville's Sports Personality of the Year in 1991. He earned the award after joining forces with former resident Gcd Stonehouse to build the long-awaited Stouffville Track facility next to the high school.

Connell personally headed up the school's own fund raising drive to help defray costs of the track facility, which was unique in that it was taken on as a joint effort between the York Region Board of Education and the town. When I asked him

back then just how many hours he had contributed towards the track project, Connell said he hadn't been keeping track, but that it was probably several hundred hours. Not a bad contribution to the sons and daughters of Stouffville residents present and future. Connell told me he took on the job of school leader in the project after then-SDSS student council president Julian Franklin single-handedly convinced the school board to put up a grant towards the track.

"For years and years, Jim Rehill (now retired, long time SDSS phys.ed head and coach) and I went to the various principals of the school and told them to get us a track, but nothing ever happened," Connell told me in June, 1991. "But when Julian went and got the grant from the board, I realized that someone from the school was going to have to get involved."

And involved he got. Going through my back issues, his creative fund raising projects kept popping up everywhere. He even succeeded in getting the students involved in things like laying the sod around the track so they could feel a sense of ownership. As well as helping spearhead the track, Connell's list of contributions to the SDSS sports scene through almost three decades is endless.

So you can understand how betrayed he felt when certain members of the community vented their wrath in his direction after he and SDSS girls' phys.ed head Sheila Coleman made

the decision to shut down the school's extracurricular program at the start of the current school year to protest cutbacks in time allocated them for administering the school's huge and vital sports program. A recent unsigned letter in the Tribune berating this decision proved extremely unsettling to him. Since then, the smile is gone from the face of the guy who keeps you up to date on the school sports scene.

Sure, I guess you could accuse Connell of being a little naive, of not fully understanding that when one makes a decision of the magnitude he did, there are always going to be those who strongly disagree. That was made pretty clear at the recent parent-teacher meeting.

Teachers and others in the public sector sometimes find it difficult to hold their situations up against most of us in the private sector who have had to greatly increase our output while seeing little or no increase in remuneration or benefits over the past six or seven years. And that's not to mention the thousands of victims of downsizing who must still continue to pay the property taxes that support public sector employees.

But like Joe Carter, Connell has always given his best on the job, and deserves the respect of the parents of the thousands of kids he's gone to the wall for again and again.

I only hope the old Dave and his friendly, welcoming smile returns soon.

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