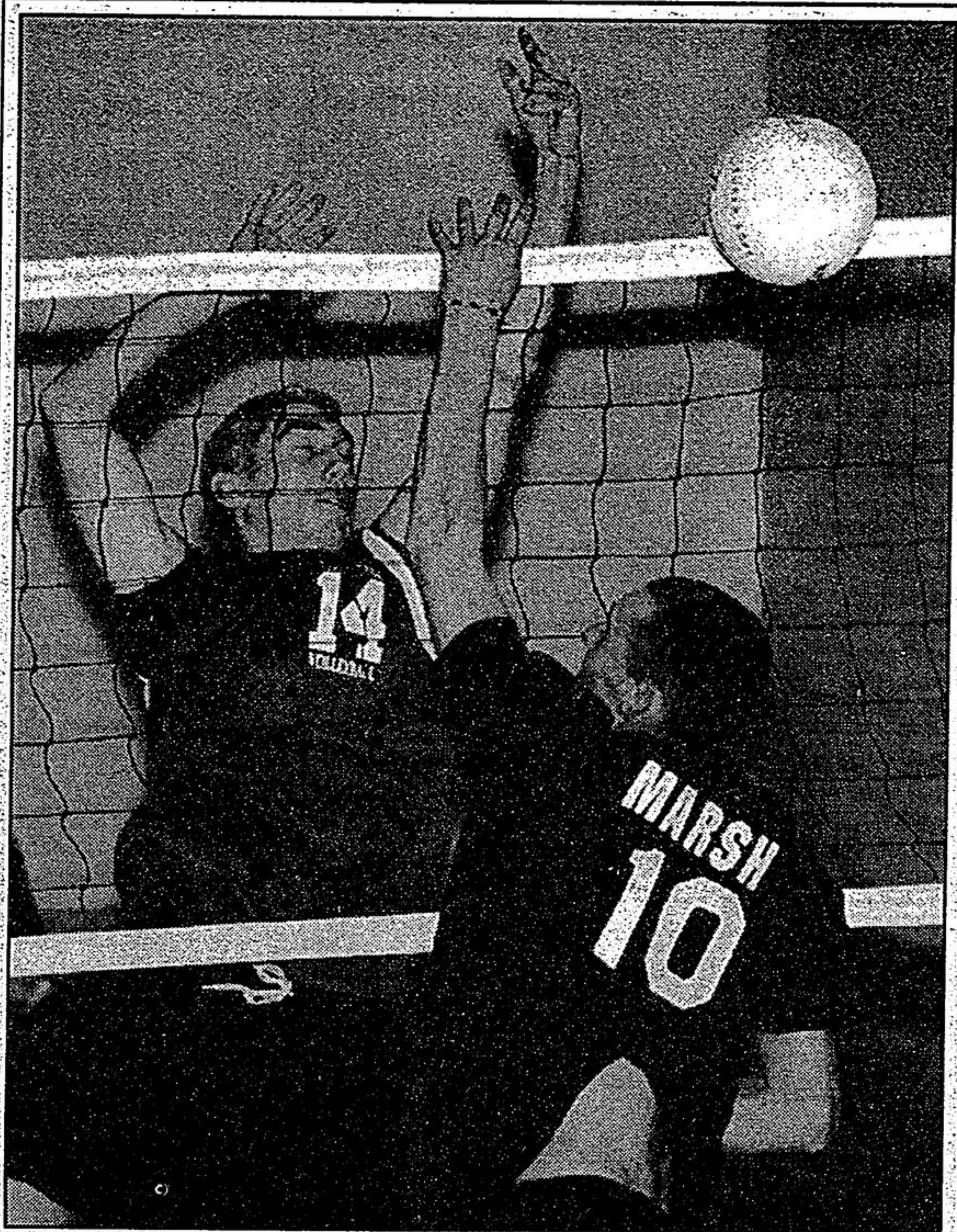


Sports & Leisure

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TAKE THAT!: Stouffville District Secondary School's Dave Whitelaw (14), gets his arm up in time to block this attempt spike by Markville Secondary School's Andrew Marsh during action in Tuesday's YRAA senior boys' volleyball contest at Middlefield Collegiate. The Markville team won the game 2-1 (15-13, 6-15, 15-13).

Photo by SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Spirited performance puts Cougars to rest

BRUCE STAPLEY
Correspondent

The Spirit of Stouffville needed a couple of big rebounds to send the kids home happy from their game with the Cobourg Cougars Thursday at the Rec Centre.

The Spirit first recovered from a bad start, then bounced back with a last-minute goal after squandering a two-goal lead to claim a 6-5 win in their Provincial Junior A Hockey League game.

The contest was played in front of a large crowd, including many school children taking advantage of a Spirit offer of a free ticket when they brought along their mom or dad.

Winger Scott Martin's goal with just under a minute to play in regulation time gave the Spirit their second win in a row. The team already has half as many victories as it did in the entire 1996-97 season.

The triumph enabled the Spirit to climb into a fifth-place tie with the Lindsay Muskies, two points behind the Couchiching Terriers in the battle for the fourth and final playoff spot.

The Spirit fell behind 2-0 in the first period, but roared back to tie it early in the second on power play goals by Jason Ellis and Darcy King. Newcomer Phil Barski, picked up in a three-way deal with the Mississauga Chargers and the defending Provincial league playoff champion Milton Merchants earlier this week, made it 3-2 on

a steal in the Cougars' end later in the period. The Cougars came right back with their only goal of the period, but Jeff Morris scored on a sharp set-up by King and Geoff Keillor to restore the lead with less than a minute to intermission.

The home squad seemed to be running away with the game when King netted his second of the night on a power play four minutes into the third to extend the lead to two goals.

However, a rash of penalties and some sloppy play enabled the visitors to tie it up with two and a half minutes to go in the game.

But the Spirit won a faceoff in the Cobourg zone, with Marshall whistling the puck around the end boards to King, who fed it out front to Martin for the big goal.

"It was a character win," said Spirit general manager Clive Moody. "They fought back from a 2-0 deficit and then won it in the final minute."

While Spirit head coach Dan Larmer wasn't happy with his team's inconsistency or the numerous power play opportunities given up, he was delighted to take the two points.

"We still haven't played a consistent 60 minutes of hockey all season," he noted. "We gave them nine power-play opportunities tonight. But you can't complain about a win."

Larmer was pleased with how his team rallied after falling behind early.

"We came right back and took control of the game in the second period."

He was also impressed with the Spirit power play, which executed three pretty goals.

"They were moving the puck

well on the power play. John (assistant coach Peron) can take the credit for that. He had them working on the power play in practice last night (Wednesday)."

Winger Kevin Edgar continued his recent playmaking prowess, with his three assists giving him seven set ups in two games.

Barski, who also had an assist, was with the Newmarket 87's last season. He started this season with the Mississauga squad in the provincial league's west conference. The Spirit also acquired Randy Stolec from Milton, along with the rights to 19-year-old defenceman Jason Neal.

Neal played with Mississauga last season.

The Spirit sent Jasen Hopiavouri to Milton in the deal.

Barski and Stolec played on a line with Kyle Chapman, who was playing his first game after being sidelined with an injury for three weeks.

"I think they played very well, especially considering they had never played together before and Stolec didn't know he was playing until 3:30 this afternoon (Thursday)," commented Larmer.

Moody said the move is likely the first of several.

"Barski and Stolec can both score, and that's something we needed. We're not done wheeling and dealing yet. We've got to upgrade our hockey team."

The Spirit play host to the Timmins Golden Bears tonight in the Stouffville team's first interlocking game with a Northern Ontario Hockey Association team.

Game time is 7:30 p.m. at the Rec Centre.

No field day for Spartans in semis

BRUCE STAPLEY
Correspondent

Better to go out with a bang than a whimper.

That was how the Stouffville District Secondary School (SDSS) Spartans field hockey team concluded its 1997 season odyssey Wednesday in Newmarket.

The Spartans put forth a valiant effort against their highly rated Newmarket H.S. opponents, but were shaded 1-0 in their York Region Secondary School (YRAA) semi-final contest.

The Spartans had advanced to the semis by virtue of their dramatic 3-2 shoot-out victory over Dr. J.M. Dennis S.S. Monday.

The Spartans quickly recovered after a shaky start to carry the play to their opponents, but couldn't capitalize on their opportunities.

Newmarket finally broke the scoreless tie with a goal with just under 10 minutes remaining in the game.

"It was the finest high school field

hockey game I've seen in York Region," marvelled Spartans coach Heather Henricks.

"All (Spartan) team members should be congratulated on a great game and a fabulous season. Throughout the season all team members improved their skills dramatically and the team spirit was amazing."

Henricks also praised the efforts of team manager Will Crothers, and said graduating players Katie Scorrar, Carolyn Noakes and Amanda Fockler had finished their high school field hockey careers on a high note.

SENIOR GIRLS HOOP IT UP WITH CLOSE WIN

Sandra Giles' last-minute basket put the Stouffville District Secondary School Spartans senior girls' over the top in a dramatic 28-27 win over Brother Andre Catholic High School on Tuesday.

Hannah Fleming topped the Spartans with 13 points while Andrea Moller hit for six and Giles, four.

Michelle Babb and Heather McManus each chipped in with two points, with Tracey Hoche adding one.



Peewee Clippers sailing along

Stouffville peewee Clippers teams held their own in recent ice action.

The Barker Roofing major peewee Clippers split a pair of matches to run their season record to five wins and two defeats.

The Stouffville boys fell 5-2 to East Gwillimbury at the Rec Centre on Oct. 15, then bounced Pickering 7-2 in another home game four days later.

Cody Bennett netted both Clippers goals against East Gwillimbury, with Robert Hooper drawing an assist.

Josh Brillinger hit for the hat trick to lead the Clippers offence in the win over Pickering.

Jesse Miller and Marcus D'Annunzio each scored twice. Assists went to Matt Wright (3), Anthony Tsiopolous and Cam Davis (two each), Kyle Sandiford and Tyler McMaster.

The Smalley Christmas Tree/Grey Power Insurance minor peewee Clippers went undefeated in weekend play, playing Ajax to a 1-1 tie on the road Saturday before returning home to edge Pickering 2-1 on Sunday.

Nick Hawkins had the lone Stouffville marker Saturday, with the helper coming from Mark Carruthers. Michael McManus was outstanding in the Clippers' net in preserving the tie. Brian Taylor netted both Clippers goals in Sunday's win. The second, a shorthanded effort, came with just 50 seconds left in the game to secure the victory.

Assists were provided by Carruthers and Jesse Maillet.

Kyle Martin frustrated Pickering with strong goaltending to ensure the win. The Clippers are at home for games today and Sunday.