

Sports & Leisure

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Spirit drop two on the weekend

Down but not quite out. The Spirit of Stouffville still have an outside chance of achieving the goal they set at the outset of their third Provincial Junior A Hockey League season.

The Spirit, who fell 5-2 to the Kingston Voyageurs on Saturday at the Rec Centre before being blanked 8-0 by the Hurricanes in Newmarket on Sunday, have 35 points with three games left in the season.

"We said we were shooting for 40 points at the start of the season, 20 wins," said head coach Dan Larmer, who noted his team only managed eight wins last season.

"We figured that would be enough to make the playoffs," he added.

But with the tightness of the Phillips Division, the Spirit are the only team which has been below the 500 mark all season long - the vast improvement just wasn't enough.

"It's been an emotional battle since last September," said Larmer. "We

were still in it until a week or so ago. But now it's a huge let down. The guys have worked so hard."

The Spirit were without East Conference leading scorer Darcy King for both weekend games.

The prolific centreman was suspended after being drawn into a fight against the Collingwood Blues last Thursday. It was the first action King has missed in two years with the Stouffville club.

The Spirit's number-two centre, Phil Barski, was sidelined for Sunday's game, which saw Newmarket strike for six second-period goals to run off with the game.

"It's hard to win without your top two centres," offered Larmer. Barski and Geoff Keillor had the Spirit goals Saturday against Kingston. The match was a make-up game for the Jan. 10 match that had to be rescheduled due to the ice storm.

The Spirit entertain the Couchiching Terriers Thursday night at the Rec Centre, then travel to Orillia for a return match Friday.

The Stouffville club closes out the season against Newmarket at the Rec Centre Sunday at 7:30 p.m.



WHERE'S THE PUCK?: M. Stanton Electroplating goalkeeper Christopher Boake searches frantically for a loose puck as this Harvey's-Swiss-Chalet opponent (centre), and Boake's teammate (right), do battle in front of the net during Saturday's Whitchurch-Stouffville Minor Hockey Association tyke contest at the Rec Centre. The Stanton team won the game 5-4.

Photo by SJOERD WITTEVEEN

A Spirited win for tykes

Justin Hulshof had the hat trick, and Malcolm Forbes netted a pair, to give the Houston Ford tyke Spirit an 8-2

win over Whitby in recent action.

Michael Sooley, Patrick Salvagna and Grant Sommerville had single scores for Stouffville.

Assists went to Chris Lombardo (three), Brad Maxwell (two), Kyle Cussion, Forbes, Hulshof, Sooley and Dennis O'Shaughnessy.

The win enabled the selects to end the regular season with a record of nine wins, five losses and two ties.

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"SPORTSMAN" OF THE WEEK



JIM WAGG

Jim, who passed away after a three-year battle with cancer last week, proved to be just as exemplary in dealing with life's adversities as he was coaching, managing, and promoting local sport teams and organizations over the past three decades.

Way to tough it out until the final buzzer, Jim

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Sharks feast on opposition, Panthers tie

The Stouffville Sharks and Panthers hockey teams held their own recently against Durham in the first games played by the local ladies squads.

L.J. Bartel and Lauren Porter scored to give the Sharks a 2-1 victory in their game.

Assists went to Joan Rainbow and Susie Stiner, while Mandy Patterson shone in the Stouffville goal.

It was Bisa Rivers scoring her team's lone goal as the Panthers played Durham to a 1-1 tie.

Porter and Stephanie Bruno assisted. Hazel Crammond was solid in the Panthers net.

Jim Wagg exemplified good sportsmanship

"The Lord," said the voice of the prominent Stouffville sports personality on the other end of the telephone line last Friday morning, "works in strange and mysterious ways."

How else can you possibly account for the three-year battle with the relentless cancer which finally led to the death of exemplary Stouffville sportsman and all round good guy Jim Wagg last week.

Jim was about as far removed from the Vince Lombardi "winning isn't everything, it's the only thing" mentality as you could find.

In his 30 years as a kids hockey and ball coach, adult sports team and league organizer, he always believed that just to be out there was all that counted - winning was just a nice bonus.

He never wanted to see a big fuss made about anything he did. That was made quite clear last summer when I talked to him upon his being named the town's Sports Personality of the Year. He had reached yet another turning point in his cancer treatment, and was to be told within a month or so what his chances of survival were.

"But don't say anything about that in your story," he insisted. Having gone a whole eight months cancer free, before being afflicted by his second bout with the disease, here he was once again at the cross roads. An yet there was not anxiety, no cry of "why me?". Just the same basic, upbeat approach to life he always exemplified. He was ever at peace with whatever the powers that be had in mind for him, no matter how much he might have to endure. And he had to endure his share, healthwise and, at times, in other areas of life.

Jim suggested his willingness to get involved with kids sports three decades back was the result of his own childhood in Toronto's west end in the 1940s. There had been no one to organize a game for the kids back then, and he saw his move to Stouffville as



Bruce Stapley

Sports Notes

chance to make up for that. He eventually came to see that sports just wasn't for kids, and threw himself into adult sport with the same gusto he had once reserved for the kids. He was there when they founded the Stouffville Amateur Hockey League, and was on the scene when the Monday Night Men's Lob Ball League came to be. The men's ball league may well be the most successful sportsmen's league of its kind. With no umpires and a minimum of formality, it represents the ultimate in sport for the sheer pleasure of it. The men's hockey league has also flourished on the principle of fairness and equity. Jim told me those two leagues represented his proudest involvements. It's just not going to be the same this summer without Jim sitting there on the picnic table beside the snack bar at Monday Night Ball. Even though we all knew he was being hit with left and right jabs by his adversary the past three years, he kept bouncing back, leaving us all to believe there was an aura of invincibility to him. And in the end, as we alluded to at the outset in this column, I suppose his example, both on the playing field and in his time of physical affliction, were designed to make us all take a good look at our own lives.

Jim's legacy, the true essence of the man as a sportsman, could well be what he told me during our conversation last summer upon his being cited for his town award. I think that somewhere, somehow, we should find a way of having this code emblazoned on every ball park and ice surface in Stouffville.

"For me it's always been the game, not to win. As long as we have a good time, that's all that matters," Jim Wagg.

On behalf of everyone whose lives you made that much better by giving them a chance to play, thanks for all the good times, Jim.