

SPORTS: *The Spirit of Stouffville junior A hockey club prepare to embark on a new season tonight at the rec centre*

Spirited optimism for a good season

BY BRUCE STAPLEY
CORRESPONDENT

The rubber meets the road tonight as the Spirit of Stouffville open what they hope will be a breakthrough season.

The Spirit, with a roster including 13 new faces and 11 returnees, kick off the 1998-99 Provincial Junior A Hockey League campaign against the Durham Huskies at 7:30 p.m. at the rec centre.

While new Spirit head coach Brian Perrin said he's unfamiliar with the Huskies, as well as several of the other six former Metro league teams in the newly formed Central Division, he knows it won't be easy as he attempts to lead the team to its first ever playoff berth.

"Teams like Couchiching, Newmarket, Aurora, Wexford, Markham and Collingwood will always be strong," said the former Newmarket Hurricanes associate coach. "You don't



BRIAN PERRIN
Plans to place an emphasis on defence

really know where you stand until the season starts, but I think we can compete with them."

Perrin said the key to keeping the opposition at bay is for his team to stay on its own track rather than trying to adopt the style of the team they are playing on any given night.

"If we focus more on playing our game and force the other team to come to us, we'll be okay."

The coach said the Spirit would stress team defence, but not at the expense of speed and scoring.

"We plan to play a fast, aggressive style of hockey."

"When we have the puck, it will be team offence, but

when we don't have it, it's team defence."

Perrin said his players have displayed a strong work ethic during training camp. The coaching staff is trying to instill a combination of physical aggressiveness and mental toughness.

"It's important that we're strong emotionally. Sometimes when you're not mentally tough you can lose the game before it starts."

Along that line, Perrin said discipline would be crucial. "We want to play physical hockey without taking needless penalties. For instance, you can't let that slash bother you, you just have to get his number and get him later."

Perrin expects his players to go into every game expecting to win.

"We want to be a confident team, but not cocky. There's a fine line between the two," said Perrin, whose club plays its first road game against the Huntsville Wildcats on Saturday.

Clippers apparel on sale

The Whitchurch-Stouffville Minor Hockey Association is making available Clippers clothing for the coming season. Golf shirts, sweatshirts, T-shirts and brushed cotton caps emblazoned with the Clippers logo will be on display in the rec centre area next to pad B. Order forms can be picked up in the display area.

Education for goalies

Aspiring young goalkeepers will get the chance to learn the basics of the craft this fall thanks to a new initiative taken by the Whitchurch-Stouffville Minor Hockey Association.

The association is offering a 10-week goalie clinic beginning Oct. 13 at the rec centre. Sessions are to be held Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m.

The clinic is being run by Kim Pierce, who operates an indoor goalie range facility in Markham.

A two-hour training session at the range is included in the \$130 fee.

"This clinic is geared towards house league goalies aged 8-12, as well as the younger rep level goalies," said

Anne Salvagna, association player development and training co-ordinator.

She added the goalie clinic is to be the first of several clinics offered to association players this season.

"We're planning a skills clinic, and we're going to introduce a contact clinic now that body checking starts at the minor atom level," she revealed.

Salvagna said the association is in the process of building a library that will offer special drill books for coaches.

To be completed in time for the 1999-2000 season, the library is to be located in the association room at the rec centre.

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Thornhill Rattlers

Junior A Hockey Club



Home Games at Thornhill Community Centre

(Bayview & John)

Home Opener
Saturday Sept. 19 7:30 p.m. vs. Shelburne Wolves

Saturday Sept. 26 7:30 p.m. vs. Couchiching Terriers

Saturday Oct. 3 7:30 p.m. vs. North York Rangers

Monday Oct. 5 7:30 p.m. vs. Durham Huskies

Saturday Oct. 17 7:30 p.m. vs. Stouffville Spirit

Saturday Oct. 24 7:30 p.m. vs. Huntsville Wildcats

Saturday Oct. 31 7:30 p.m. vs. Newmarket Hurricanes

Saturday Nov. 7 7:30 p.m. vs. Wexford Raiders

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