

SPORTS

HOCKEY: Spirit centreman leads Provincial Junior A Hockey League Central Conference in scoring

Barski is making good on his promise

Phil who? Fervent followers of the Spirit of Stouffville could be forgiven for thumbing through their lineup sheets at home games in search of a clue or two as to the identity of one Phil Barski.

Here's a guy who had about as much impact as the stick boy after coming to the Spirit 10 games into last season, scoring five goals and adding a handful of assists.

But the 6-foot-2, 175-pound centreman has already surpassed his 1997-98 totals.

His eight goals and 17 assists have him sitting atop the Provincial Junior A Hockey League's Central Conference scoring race.

He has been involved in almost half of the Spirit's 54 goals, and is a kingpin on a power play that has shown signs of being potent.

Spirit owner Ed Hakonson said Barski is simply following through on a promise.

"Phil was ineffective with us last year because he was coming off a major back injury," noted Hakonson. "But he promised me he was going to be our number one scorer this year. So far he's been true to his word."

Barski is ahead of the pace set last year by Spirit points leader Darcy King, who was second overall in the conference with 103 points.

At the rate Barski is going, he'll end up with somewhere around 125 points. King, incidentally, scored the first goal of the season for his new University of Massachusetts squad last Friday night.

Barski, 19, was a member of the powerhouse Newmarket 87's team for the 1996-97 season.

He started last season with the Mississauga Chargers of the Provincial league's western conference, before coming to the Spirit in a three-way deal that also saw the Stouffville team pick up winger Randy Stolec from the Milton Merchants.

Spirit assistant coach Craig Donovan said Barski's emergence has come as a result of hard work and determination.

"He was on the ice all summer and he's been working with weights," said Donovan.

"He's committed to being the best player he can possibly be," he added.



Bruce Stapley

Barski's linemate Kevin Edgar held down sixth place in the conference scoring race after nine games with seven goals and 12 assists.

Edgar, a winger who combined so splendidly with King on the Spirit's big line last year and finished just a few points behind the centre, seems to be adjusting well to Barski's style.

Spirit centre Dave Zelasko is 15th in the scoring race with eight goals and five assists.

The production of Barski, Edgar and Zelasko has left the Spirit with a total of 54 goals, third in the conference.

The team has surrendered 53 scores, third worst overall.

TERRIERS TAME SPIRIT

The Spirit looked like they had the second-place Couchiching Terriers muzzled Friday night in Rama, but fell victim to a third period let down in a 9-6 loss.

The Spirit carried an impressive 6-2 lead into the third period and seemed to be home free until the Terriers exploded for seven goals to take the game 9-6.

"It was a stellar game until the wheels fell off in the third," said Hakonson, who insists the Spirit are playoff-bound.

The Spirit, whose record now stands at four wins and six losses, got goals from Barski, Jeff Cochrane, Ryan Stovold, Brendan McCann, Zelasko and Mike Micheff.

The Spirit have three games in three nights beginning with tonight's 7:30 p.m. home game with the 11th place Huntsville Wildcats. They travel to Shelburne tomorrow night to play the Wolves, with whom they share fifth place.

On Saturday, the Spirit will be in Thornhill to face the Rattlers, who have six points.

What Barski, Edgar and company need to put them over the top is a large, boisterous crowd similar to the ones that have cheered the Newmarket Hurricanes on to a perfect record of 11 wins and no defeats.



PHOTO/LORI EMMERSON

THE PUCK STOPS HERE

Stouffville Clippers goalkeeper Carman Auciello kicks out an attempted scoring attempt by a Scarborough Young Bruins player during action in the Stouffville Clippers juvenile tournament at the rec centre on Saturday. Looking on at the play is Clippers' rearguard Marc Myers (6). The Clippers won the game 5-4.

A Wise effort helps minor novices win tournament

Jamie Wise collected five goals in three games, including a hat trick in a 4-1 win over Orillia in the final, to help direct the minor-novice Clippers to the title at the recent TNT Thanksgiving minor-novice A tournament.

The Clippers went undefeated in the tournament as they edged host Tottenham/New Tecumseth 4-3 in its first-round contest.

Patrick Salvagna netted a trio of markers, including the winner in the second overtime period, to earn Player of the Game honours.

Justin Hulshof rounded out the scoring for the Clippers.

Wise delivered a pair of goals, and Michael Sooley, Hulshof and Matthew Raguseo added singles, in a 5-2 triumph over Vaughan in a semi-final encounter.

Raguseo was named Player of the Game. In the final against Orillia, Hulshof rounded out the Clippers' scoring.

Wise was named Player of the Game. Hulshof collected five assists in the three games while Dennis O'Shaughnessy was credited with two. Singles helpers were earned by Chris Lombardo, Kurtis Hulshof, Chris Blake, Raguseo, Conner Stevens, Wise and Werek.

The Clippers also received strong goaltending from the tandem of Gregory Outram and Matthew Jenkins.

Hulshof captured the tournament shoot-out competition, besting 15 other shooters. Werek was third.

Split hurts juvenile Clippers

The Stouffville Clippers juveniles were done in by a no-show at its own tournament held over the Thanksgiving weekend at the rec centre.

The Clippers won one game and lost one in

preliminary round action.

However, its goals for totals fell three short of the total required to advance to the semi-finals.

The Clippers lost its opener 5-3 to Humber Valley on Saturday morning before coming back to edge the Scarborough Young Bruins 5-4 later the same day.

But when the Connecticut Whalers failed to show up for the tournament, the Clippers, along with the other two teams in their division, were each awarded a 1-0 victory.

"That meant we had to score eight goals in our final game to make the playoff round," explained Clippers head coach Lee Burton.

The Mississauga North Stars blasted the Chesapeake Chiefs 17-1 in Sunday's championship game.

"It was a good tournament," noted Burton. "But we should have been there in the finals."

Tyler Markle scored his first goal of the season for the Clippers.

Carmen Auciello was sharp in goal for the Clippers.

The Clippers look to extend its regular season record to three wins and no losses when they host Pickering on Sunday at 8:40 p.m. at the rec centre.

Locals Star for Richmond Hill

Stouffville natives Jake Carrick and Michael Del Zotto played contributing roles to help the Richmond Hill minor-novice AAA Stars capture the recent 13th annual Tim Horton Hamilton Reps International Invitational Tournament 124.

Carrick scored a goal in the Stars' 8-0 first-round win over the London Junior Knights.

Del Zotto scored twice to help the Stars win its third outing over the Waterloo Winterhawks 8-0.

Carrick chipped in with a goal for the Stars in a 9-4 semi-final victory over the Stoney Creek Ice Breakers.