

# SPORTS

THE YEAR IN SPORTS: many defining moments of national, regional and local significance

## 1998: a year of peaks and valleys

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CORRESPONDENT

It was a year of championships, challenges and changes of scenery on the Stouffville sporting stage.

Stouffville athletes traveled from coast to coast in pursuit of athletic honours, while the town was represented once again in the world of professional sport.

It was also a year marked by sadness as 30-year-veteran Stouffville coach and adult sports advocate Jim Wag, who was named the town's Sports Personality of the Year in 1997, succumbed to a year battle with cancer in February.

As always, hockey dominated the Stouffville sports scene. Former Clipper Brad May was traded to the Vancouver Canucks after six and a half seasons with the Buffalo Sabres.

Keith Acton, who still calls Stouffville home, saw his Philadelphia Flyers eliminated in the first round of the NHL playoffs, then bolted the Flyers to accept an assistant coaching position with the New York Rangers.

The Spirit of Stouffville finished its third Provincial Junior A Hockey League season in last place in the Phillips Division with 16 wins, 32 losses and two ties for 35 points. The team's playmaking centremen Darcy King



**DARCY KING**  
Spirit forward earns hockey scholarship

scored 35 goals and added 68 assists to finish second in the East Conference scoring race. Linemate Kevin Edgar was sixth with 90 points.

Despite their lowly finish, the Spirit saw a trio of their players scooped up by Ontario Hockey League and university teams south of the border.

King was signed by the University of Massachusetts; while seventeen-year-old forward Kyle Chapman was the second-round selection of the Plymouth Whalers in the annual OHL Draft. The six-foot-three, 205-pound Aurora resident was picked 35th overall. Spirit captain Jeff Marshall was signed by Ohio State University.

The Spirit replaced its entire coaching staff and general manager in April. New head coach Brian Perrin, along with assistant coach Craig Donovan and new general manager Dieter Schmidt, triggered a running feud between the Spirit and the Newmarket Hurricanes when they abandoned similar posts with the Hurricanes to join the Spirit.



**BRIAN PERRIN**  
Takes over as Spirit head coach

But the Spirit also promoted from within as Ken Burrows moved from his post as head scout to assistant coach, and executive member Eldon Wag was named assistant GM. The Spirit and Uxbridge Bruins of the Central Ontario Junior C Hockey League finally joined forces, signing an affiliation agreement.

The long-awaited amalgamation of the Provincial League and the rival Metro Junior A League in May set the stage for rivalries between the Spirit of Stouffville and the Markham Waxers, Thornhill Rattlers and other GTA area teams.

It was a banner year for Stouffville boys' rep hockey as four Clippers teams advanced as far as the third round on OMHA playoff action. The midjet Clippers swept Fort Erie three straight to advance to the OMHA finals against Guelph, but it was a costly victory as three players were suspended after a brawl in the final game. The Clippers fell three straight to Guelph in the provincial finals. The bantams and juveniles made it to the OMHA semifinals.

The minor atom and minor pee wee Clippers won their respective York Simcoe championships. The tyke, mite and major atom selects all won their York-Simcoe titles. In girls' hockey, a record seven Whichurch-Stouffville Girls Hockey Association (WSGHA) teams advanced to the provincial finals, with the Stouffville Stars pee wee and atom girls both finishing first in North Metro Girls Hockey League play.

On the softball diamond, three Stouffville aces wore the colours of other towns as they earned distinction at the Canadian Junior Men's Fastball Championships in Grande Prairie, Alta. in August. Vandroff's Rino Dambrosio was named Most Valuable Player of the playoff round as he led his Fingal team to the title at the national show down in August. The 21-year-old centre fielder had nine hits in 13 at bats in the playoff



STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

Katie Jones (top), shown here taking on her sister, Jennie, during a practice session at the Sheffield Judo Club, was one of six members that went to Abbotsford, B.C. to compete in the Canadian championships. Jones ended up with a silver medal in the girls' 52-kg. category.

round, including two home runs and a three-run triple. Stouffville's Paul Koert and Evan Boyd helped their Napanee team to a fourth place showing.

The Stouffville Stingers midget girls' rep softball team took the gold at the Provincial Women's Softball Association championship qualifier in

August.

The Stouffville pee wee boys won the OASA silver medal, then took the bronze at the Eastern Canadian finals in Prince Edward Island. The Stouffville squirt boys won the bronze in the OASA finals.

Stouffville's Marlee Johnson pitched the Port Perry Angels to the title at the Eastern Canadian bantam girls' softball championships in Nova Scotia.



**MARLEE JOHNSON**  
Pitches Port Perry to ball title

In what may well be the end of the line for sport as it once was at Stouffville District Secondary School (SDSS), Danielle Timms and Alison Crowder were co-winners of the Outstanding Senior Female Athlete award for 1997-98, while the senior boys honours went to Ian Hazlewood. Top junior athletes were Amy McElroy and Shane Timms. It was the second year in a row as top senior athletes for Hazlewood and Crowder.

The school's junior boys' hockey team won the silver at the prestigious St. Mike's/High School Tournament in Toronto. The Spartans then went all the way to the YRAA championship game, falling 4-3 to Woodbridge's Father Bressani H.S.

The SDSS senior girls' Spartans

advanced to the OFSAA basketball finals by taking the silver at the YRAA finals.

On the track last spring, SDSS athlete Josh Sheriff qualified for the OFSAA Track and Field Championships when he came third in midget boys shot put at the Central Region OFSAA Qualifier in May. The school's Tracy Hoher won the gold in the midget girls' 400-metre race at the YRAA championships in May.

The SDSS girls' slow-pitch team took the YRAA crown in June, harnessing the wind for a last inning 6-5 win over St. Joan of Arc C.H.S.

All SDSS sports programs were shut down in the fall as teachers said they no longer had the time to serve as coaches.

Six members of the Sheffield Judo Club made the trip to Abbotsford, B.C. for the Juvenile Canadian Judo Championships. Kyle Chee-a-tow earned the silver in the boys 43-kilo-gram class, while Katie Jones won silver in the girls 52-kg. class. Dustin and Trevor Chee-a-tow, and Seiji Ishiguro, all had fifth place showings.

The 1998 calendar year saw several Stouffville riders prove themselves in the Canadian equestrian arena. Whichurch-Stouffville resident Margaret Biggs reaffirmed her position as this country's top amateur Saddle Seat Equitation rider, leading Canada to the silver medal at the World Cup of Saddle Seat Equitation in South Africa

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