

**SPORTS**



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

**A STICKLER FOR PERFECTION**

Wag Canada Leasing's Shay Fitzpatrick (left), uses her stick to take the puck away from Moller Insurance Ltd. counterpart Anne Silegren in this Stouffville-Markham Girls' Hockey Association junior houseleague contest at the rec centre on Monday. Wag Canada won the game 7-1.

**It was a Spirited season**

The long faces in the Spirit of Stouffville dressing room after last Thursday's first ever Ontario Provincial Junior A Hockey League playoff game played at the rec centre said it all.

The Spirit's 3-1 loss to the Collingwood Blues had, for all intents and purposes, finished its season.

A 4-1 loss the following night in Collingwood gave the Blues a three-game sweep of the opening round best-of-five set.

The fact that the Spirit proved they belonged on the ice with a team that finished a full 37 points ahead of them in the Central Conference standings was no consolation on this particular night. It only made it worse to know that a few missed assignments and a couple of questionable calls by game officials was all that stood in the way of the Spirit stealing at least one win in the first two games of the series.

Spirit assistant coach Ken Burrows offered his solemn take on the tough loss his team had just endured. The Blues, he suggested, won on experience; the ability to capitalize on the other team's mistakes. The Spirit, on the other hand, couldn't take advantage of their golden opportunities.

Meanwhile, in the Blues dressing room, head coach Tim Dickey admitted he hadn't expected to see the Spirit stand up to his outfit the way they did.

Dickey also conceded his players

were playing with a spectre hanging over them, the ghost of last season's first-round playoff upset defeat at the hands of the Couchiching Terriers, a team that, like the Spirit, held the final playoff spot.

"We were a little tight on our sticks," Dickey said. "But sometimes you've got to give your opponent credit for that."

One must only consider the Blues' season record to understand the enormity of the task undertaken by the Spirit. The Blues won 41, tied one, and lost only nine. They were undefeated from Dec. 1 through season's end.

When the disappointment wears off, the Spirit can take pride in the fact they gave the Blues a good battle.

As Spirit goalie Rob Zago noted after Thursday's game "at least we've proven to ourselves we can play with them."

And having finally proven they belong with the big boys after four



Bruce Stapley

years of tagging along behind, the Spirit of Stouffville can now go into the future with the knowledge that playoff victories are within their reach.

This coming of age can only mean that finally, the same capacity crowds that flock to Newmarket and Collingwood games will beat a path to the rec centre on winter Thursday nights, giving the team the moral and financial support it needs to go over the top on the ice.

**Atom Stars shine**

The Stouffville Atom Stars captured the recent Durham West Girls' Hockey Tournament title after defeating Scarborough 1-0 in the championship game.

Cassandra Sparks scored the game's lone goal with an assist from Madeline Wilkinson. Elizabeth Knox stopped 25 shots to record the shutout.

After losing its first two games to Scarborough 2-0 and Peterborough 3-1, the Stars rebounded to defeat Oshawa 2-1 and Nepean 3-1.

Sparks delivered six goals while Allison Guance had two assists. Shannon Blackman and Kim Bound each had one helper. Other team members that contributed to the win included: Brittney Bince, Krista Montgomery, Bethany Oeming, Reagan Walton, Shannon Hamar, Krystal Kennedy, Shari Dixon, Claire Pearce and Stephanie Krucas.

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1999 INTERIM TAXES

**FIRST INSTALLMENT DUE - MARCH 12<sup>TH</sup>, 1999**

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Payments not received by March 12<sup>th</sup>, 1999 are subject to a penalty charge of 1.25% on the first day of default and on the first day of each calendar month thereafter until paid.

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Catherine Goldstone  
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