

A Spirited outlook for round three

BY BRUCE STAPLEY
Correspondent

The Spirit of Stouffville will get a taste of their own medicine when they begin their Provincial Junior A Hockey League North Conference final series with the Couchiching Terriers tomorrow evening.

Having knocked off the defensively inclined Aurora Tigers in the opening round series and the high-scoring Newmarket Hurricanes in the conference semifinals, the Spirit will be up against an outfit that uses an approach similar to theirs in Couchiching.

"We're two identical teams," said Spirit head coach Brian Perrin. "We both have speed and good goaltending and a well-balanced attack."

The only difference, says Perrin, is that the Terriers are a little older, as were the Tigers and Hurricanes.

"They have a little more experience than we do."

But while most teams beginning a Junior A season with seven 16-year-old players in their lineup would be at a



BRIAN PERRIN
Spirit coach feels Terriers mirror his own club

definite disadvantage come the post season, the Spirit's youth corps have played a crucial role in the team's meteoric playoff ascent. Perrin attributes that to the fact that he and assistant coaches Craig Donovan and Ken Burrows have used the entire roster throughout the season.

"We didn't sit our rookies on the bench," said Perrin. "We geared our whole season to the first playoff game. We didn't become a one-line team, we played them all."

The Spirit also looked for players with a winning tradition when scouting in the off-season.

"The guys we recruited came from winning teams," noted Perrin. "When it comes down to big games they know how to win."

That became evident when the Spirit swept the Tigers four straight before upsetting the first-place Hurricanes four games to two.

He suggests the Spirit's 4-0 road victory over the Terriers in November was an indication of what lay ahead. The Spirit won two and lost three versus the Terriers this season.

Perrin feels the series with Couchiching should feature skating, offence and goaltending.

Games two and four are scheduled for the rec centre Sunday and March 16 at 7:30 p.m. Game three is to be played in Couchiching on March 14.

Spartans spiked in junior volleyball YRAA final

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The Stouffville District Secondary School Spartans junior girls' volleyball team threw a scare into their powerful Newmarket H.S. opponents at last week's York Region Athletic Association AAA championship final at Westmount Collegiate.

But the heavily favoured Newmarket squad recovered from a first-game 25-17 defeat to down the SDSS girls 25-11, 16-14.

It marked the third gold medal in three years for the Newmarket girls dating back to their midget triumph in the 1997-1998 season.

It also put the cap on a season that saw them win 48 of their 49 matches, with five tournament titles in five tries as well.

"We played out of our heads, we gave them a heck of a battle," said Spartans coach Sharon MacFarlane. "We made them nervous."

MacFarlane said the performance of the SDSS squad was made even more impressive by the fact that they were up against a team of girls who also play together on a club team outside school.

"We hadn't even played volleyball (at SDSS) in two years."

MacFarlane praised the efforts of team leaders Joanne Crymble, Andrea Meyer, Hannah Flemming, Sandra Giles, Sandra Winstanley and Abi Barnett.

"They were tremendous. And they got great support from the kids on the bench."

MacFarlane said the season was a complete success despite falling just short of the regional crown.

"They played so well you couldn't be upset. It was so much fun. I'm really pleased."

Senior girls spiked

The SDSS senior girls' volleyball team was defeated by traditional rival Sutton D.H.S. in last Thursday's showdown to determine who would advance to the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Association AA championships.

Junior boys caged in semis

The SDSS Spartans junior boys' basketball team saw its Cinderella season finally come to an end last Thursday in Aurora.

The Spartans were downed 68-46 by a well-oiled Richmond Hill S.S. machine in the YRAA semifinals. The underdog Spartans held their own in three of the game's four quarters, with the Richmond Hill crew cementing the win with a second-quarter uprising.

"They outscored us 21-4 in the second quarter to go up by 19 at half time," said SDSS coach Jim Fletcher.

Fletcher said Richmond Hill was just too much for the Spartans.

"They're huge, they're tall and they didn't miss any shots. It was their day."

Shane Timms had 15 points to lead the Spartans scorers. Derek Conga hooped 11 points while Ben Bellissimo and Jon Ferguson each had seven.

Fletcher said his team never gave up. "The heart they showed was just tremendous."

He said the Spartans weren't expected to go far at the start of the season.

"They were elated just to make the playoffs."

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