

Terriers sweep Spirit in four

BY BRUCE STAPLEY
Special to The Tribune

Thank you, Stouffville, and keep the faith. That was the message from the Spirit of Stouffville as the team closed out the season with a 10-4 defeat at the hands of the Couchiching Terriers Thursday at the rec centre.

The win gave the Terriers a sweep of its best-of-seven Provincial Junior A Hockey League North Conference final.

Couchiching struck for six goals in the second period to run away with Thursday's game.

Mike Fiume, Anthony Minicucci, Michel Bond and Jamie Minchella scored for the Spirit.

While the sweep left a bitter taste in the mouths of the Spirit, all were in agreement that the team's unprecedented success in this year's playoffs marked the coming of age of the franchise. The Spirit had never won a post-season game until knocking off the Aurora Tigers and the first-place Newmarket Hurricanes before running out of gas against the Terriers.

"We got two rounds further than last year," said Spirit co-owner Ed Hakonson. "They worked darn hard to get this far."

"I'm disappointed we didn't beat Couchiching," said Spirit head coach Brian Perrin. "To make it to the conference finals is something to hang your hat on. But it's disappointing to let such an opportunity pass. But at the same time we won two big series against Aurora and Newmarket. And they didn't quit once, not even tonight (game four). We've got something to build on for next year."

Forward Chris Large, whose overtime goal gave the Spirit a dramatic series clinching win over Newmarket on March 5, said it was tough to come so far only to fall short of the ultimate goal.

"You can't be happy. You see them (the Terriers) whooping it up down



BRIAN PERRIN
Spirit coach tried to accentuate the positive

the hall and it hurts a little."

But he was confident the Spirit would follow through next season.

"Hopefully we'll win the third round next year. That's our goal."

Spirit captain Dan Oshell said the Spirit surprised even themselves with their success in the playoffs.

"We finished the regular season winning two of our last nine games but we started putting it together in the playoffs," said Oshell.

He said the series sweep at the hands of the Terriers wasn't indicative of the Spirit's abilities.

"We couldn't find a break in this series, and we had a couple of really tough series (before playing Couchiching.) But I don't think the scores of this series were representative."

Oshell said the youthful Spirit could only get better next season.

"We'll all be a year older next year."

Bond, the Spirit's leading scorer in the regular season and playoffs, said the Terriers earned their victory.

"You've got to give them credit," said Bond. "They beat us on the ice."

Bond praised Stouffville fans who filled the rec centre to capacity for all Spirit playoff games and showed their support until the end.

"It was great to see the fans. Even when it was 6-0 tonight they weren't leaving. They were behind us and the players appreciated that."

Perrin also noted the support given by the fans, who gave the Spirit several ovations in the dying moments of Thursday's final game.

"It was like having a seventh man out there on the ice," he said.

Spirit assistant coach Ken Burrows suggested the Spirit would be given new respect in the future because of what they achieved in the playoffs.

"We've given our team an identity," said Burrows. "The days of other teams taking us lightly are over."

Hockey Night in Canada icon Don Cherry was in attendance at Thursday's game. Cherry, who spoke briefly to the Spirit players following the game, was there to get a look at Grant Buckley, the 16-year-old Spirit defenceman who was drafted by Cherry's Mississauga Ice Dogs of the Ontario Hockey League last spring.

Judo club sends 10 to nationals

BY BRUCE STAPLEY
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When the team representing Ontario heads off to Lethbridge, Alta., to take part in the Canadian Juvenile and Junior Judo Championships this weekend, it will have a strong Stouffville flavour.

Ten members of Stouffville's Sheffield Judo Club are among the 66 young athletes who will take to the mat for Ontario at the International Judo Federation (IJF) sanctioned competition. Of the 10, three will be looking to repeat as national champions. Kerry Lynne Hulshof, Seiji Ishiguro and Kyle Chee-a-tow all brought home golds at last year's event.

Joining that trio this time around are fellow Sheffield club members Jennie Jones, Dustin and Trevor Chee-a-tow, Chad McClintock, David Reid, Adam Howe and Meghan Fulton. The group ranges in age from 12 to 19.

Sheffield club coach Aartje Sheffield said she's delighted to see the club send 10 athletes to the nationals after the success experienced by the eight Sheffield athletes who qualified for the 1999 tournament.

"We're pretty happy," said Sheffield. "I think Kerry Lynne, Seiji and Kyle all have a chance of repeating and I think they

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Major novice Clippers advance to semi-finals

The Stouffville major novice Clippers advanced to the York-Simcoe semi-finals after sweeping its recent best-of-three quarter-final series against Newmarket.



The Clippers won the first game 3-2

on Dennis O'Shaughnessy's overtime goal with .6 seconds left on the clock and followed that with a 4-3 win to wrap up the series.

Other scorers for the Clippers in the two games were: Malcom Forbes and Justin Hulshof two goals, one assist; Matthew Raguseo and O'Shaughnessy one goal, one assist.

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