

Spirit sweep Shamrocks, prepare for Terriers in round two

BY JIM MASON
Editor

And now for the *real* Provincial Junior A Hockey League playoffs.

What you saw, for the most part, in the opening round of the tier two league's post-season was a joke. A waste of time and road-trip gas.

Busloads of teenagers driving along wintry roads to play games in which only the final scores weren't known.

The Stouffville Spirit dispatched the Parry Sound Shamrocks Thursday for the last time, 6-2 at the Rec Complex, to easily sweep the best-of-seven series.

The Spirit scored 44 goals to Parry Sound's 10.

The Newmarket Hurricanes did the same to Durham Huskies Thursday. Ditto for the Couchiching Terriers over the Ajax Axemen. It wasn't even close.

Only the series between the third-place Collingwood Blues and fourth-place Aurora Tigers — the Blues led 3-1 after their second win in overtime Thursday — was remotely interesting in the North Conference.

Such is life in a league that allows 32 of its 37 entries to make the playoffs.

The Spirit now prepares for a real test, the conference semi-final with Couchiching, a rematch of last year's North Conference final.

The series starts Tuesday in Couchiching. The second game goes Thursday in Stouffville, with the third game the next night on Couchiching's ice. The fourth game will be played a week

from Sunday afternoon at the Rec Complex.

Can you say unfinished business? A bad taste?

The Spirit can.

The Terriers swept the Spirit in four straight for the North Conference title last March.

The Spirit was out of gas, after upsets of Aurora and Newmarket in the first two rounds, but the Terriers were full value for the championship.

The Spirit and Terriers split the four-game regular season series, with each team winning once and the other two games ending in ties.

"It should be interesting," said Spirit head coach Brian Perrin, who has led the Spirit to improved finishes in each of his three years in Stouffville. "If we want to advance to the final, we have to beat a good team. We match up well with each

other. But it will come down to who wins the one-on-one battles and who gets the better goaltending."

With one Spirit fan wielding a broom in the stands, his team completed the sweep in a listless affair Thursday.

"After we made it 1-0, both teams lost interest," said Perrin. "There was no enthusiasm."

Brad Rebic scored twice for the Spirit, who outshot the Shamrocks 51-26. Other scorers were Dan Oshell, Nevin Hamilton, Chris Large and Doug Orr. Jon Smyth had three assists.

SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING: Spirit players will take part in this afternoon's Big Brothers of York Bowl for Kids Sake event at the Stouffville Bowling Centre. Large took a high stick to the head late in Thursday's game. He left the game and was nursing a swollen face.



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