

Spirit gets even with Terriers

BY JIM MASON
Editor

There's pain. And then there's Stouffville Spirit pain.

The Couchiching Terriers got a heavy dose of the latter Thursday night at the Rec Complex.

The Spirit won 6-4 over the Terriers to even its best-of-seven Provincial Junior A Hockey League North Conference semifinal at a game apiece.

The third game of the series was to be played last night in Orillia with the fourth game 2:30 p.m. tomorrow at the Rec Complex.

The Terriers bus left Stouffville Thursday night, heavier five ice bags, all strapped to various Terrier injuries.

Big hits by Chris Large, Jon Smyth and Jesse Johnston rocked various Terriers and turned the game around.

The Spirit trailed 2-0 after the first period, but a big open-ice hit by Large on Terrier sniper Daryl Bat late in the frame set the tone.

That hit was the TSN Turning Point, said Spirit head coach Brian Perrin. "We wanted to hit them as much as possible, and when we did, we started rolling."

"I wasn't sure we were going to come out of it (losing 2-0), and (Couchiching) thought we were dead and buried."

Large scored the biggest goal in franchise history a year ago, an overtime marker that eliminated archrival Newmarket from the



CHRIS LARGE: Set the tone for Spirit in 6-4 come-from-behind win, by scoring a goal and making a big hit.

second round of the playoffs. He had another goal Thursday, to go with the hits.

"We knew we had to get checks on them," said Large, a 5-foot-9 bundle of energy from Richmond Hill. "Good clean checks and we'll be fine. Those things get the guys going."

Nevin Hamilton, the game's first star, scored two goals for the Spirit, which led 5-3 after two periods. Rookie Mike Ramsay received the largest ovation of the year at the Rec Complex, in front of 450 fans on this night, with the prettiest goal of the evening on a nifty deke 5:23 into the second.

Anthony Minicucci, on a shot from the sideboards that caught Terrier goalie Paul Schonfelder

napping, and Michel Bond had the other Spirit goals.

The Spirit outshot 47-26 including 17-3 in the first period, received solid goaltending from George Eliopoulos.

Scott Look has returned from a knee injury to shadow the always-dangerous Bond in the series.

Look yapped at Bond that he was minus one after Couchiching scored with Bond on the ice in the Terriers' 6-1 win Tuesday in Orillia. Look, a former Newmarket Hurricane, was assessed a minor penalty for the post-goal yapping.

Look was the recipient of a body check from the 6-foot-4 Johnston in Thursday's game. It knocked Look's helmet off and looked painful Stouffville Spirit painful.

SPIRITED NOTES: Alain Velleux is back on the Spirit injured list, a scout from the OHL's Sault Ste. Marie Greyhounds took in the game; the Spirit have three players from North Bay (Hamilton, Dan Oshell and Alain Duchesne). The Terriers have four (Joe Bowcock, Eric Lafontaine, Dustin Magill and Beau Moyer), ex-Spirit defence man Ryan Stovold (1998-99), a late-season addition to the Terriers, sat out Thursday's game. The Barrie resident is still battling a bowel ailment that ended his time in Stouffville prematurely.

Stouffville curlers keep on rocking out of town

Curling's a great sport. But how would I know?

I tried it once and made such an impression, the rock marks still visible at one end of the Unionville Curling Club rink.

While my involvement ended before it started, dozens of Stouffville residents, both men and women, have been bitten by the bug.

For most folk, Uxbridge is the place to be. One such enthusiast is Murray Ferguson. He's been curling there 14 years.

"Don McGregor's one of the top ice-makers in the business," says Ferguson, "Uxbridge has one of the best surfaces around."

Ferguson should know. He's played in dozens of bonspiels, always as vice.

"Less pressure," he says, "but being a skip is easier on the body because one doesn't sweep as much."

If your surname is Grant, curling's your game, Ferguson says. Ray and Mary along with sons Gary and Randy all call the Uxbridge club home. Others from Stouffville with memberships at Uxbridge include Ron and Virginia Gould; Gerry and Norma Brillinger; Joe and Grace Murray; Al and Jane Hachey; Bob and Dianne LeMotte; Cliff and Glenda Dunkeld; Debbie and Derek Emmerson; Ken and Helen Schell; Lorne and Marion Boadway; Gary and Charlotte Simonds and more.

Unionville also hosts its share of Stouffville, spielers including: Doug and Lindsay Payzant; Gary and Ina Grant; Jim and Susan Musgrave; Glenn



Jim Thomas

and Fran Allan; Eileen Damp; Terri Savoury; Harry Bowes; Bob Hammond; Don Corrigan and more.

Both the sport and the fellowship are enjoyable, Ferguson says. No matter how keen the competition, friendships are never sacrificed.

While accidents are a rare occurrence, injuries, sometimes serious, can happen, Ferguson notes.

"The first trick is learn to stand up," he says, "and keep the gripper foot down. If the other foot goes out and you land on a rock, it hurts."

Ferguson says one sometimes hears discussions concerning construction of a curling rink in Stouffville. This almost came to fruition back in the 60s. But Art Latcham, the town's philanthropist at the time, selected a Whitchurch site instead.

"It was talk, that's all it was, just talk," recalls Les Clarke, a now-retired curler. "It takes a lot of people to make a curling rink go."

At present, most local curlers go to Uxbridge and Unionville. There, the welcome mat is always out.

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