

# Spartans hold court in YRAA final

*Discipline and defence key factors in Spartans' run to York Region tier two senior boys' basketball championship*

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA  
Sports Editor

Just five years ago, members of this year's Stouffville District Secondary School Spartans senior boys' basketball team failed to win a game in York Region Athletic Association play.

Now they can be called champions.

On Tuesday, the Spartans capped off an unbeaten YRAA season and laid claim to the YRAA tier two title after defeating the visiting Father Michael McGivney Academy Magic 50-41 in their championship final.

Trailing 10-1 in the early going of their contest and 12-5 after one quarter, the Spartans turned the tables with a 20-5 scoring spree in the second quarter to seize a 25-15 halftime lead and never looked back after that.

Through three quarters, the Spartans led 37-28 and padded it to 47-28 late in the final period.

Tim Lowrie was high scorer for the Spartans with 14 points while Shane Timms added 10, Cassidy Franks nine, Tyler McMaster eight and Ben Bellissimo, five.

An elated Spartans' co-coach Jim Fletcher felt two key factors attributed to their success. One was their overall discipline and second was a tenacious defence, which after a shaky start, held a fairly athletic Magic squad in check for the remainder of the contest.

"The guys didn't panic when they were down 10-1. It was just a bit of bad luck. We were a little nervous and we missed some easy shots. But we knew the plays were there and we knew that we had the defence, that was the big thing. We played smart defence and we didn't give them the baseline. The key to any game is defence."

Leading up to Tuesday's final, Fletcher, along with co-coach Steve Shantz, felt their team would be primed for the finale.

"Shantzie and I said we had some strong practices recently and it showed in today's game."

Reflecting on the club's progression since their winless season five years ago, Fletcher cited it was the players' will that enabled them to reach a pinnacle on Tuesday.

"This group didn't play basketball in Grade 8 and when we had them as Grade 9s, they didn't win a game. But we kept on playing in the spring because they wanted to learn. They were good athletes and good students. Two years ago, they were southeast division semi-finalists and we knew then that we had a strong team."

"But with no basketball last year (due to teacher labour problems), the guys came out with vengeance this year. The sense of accomplishment is unbelievable."

"It was a good way to end the York Region season," added Shantz.

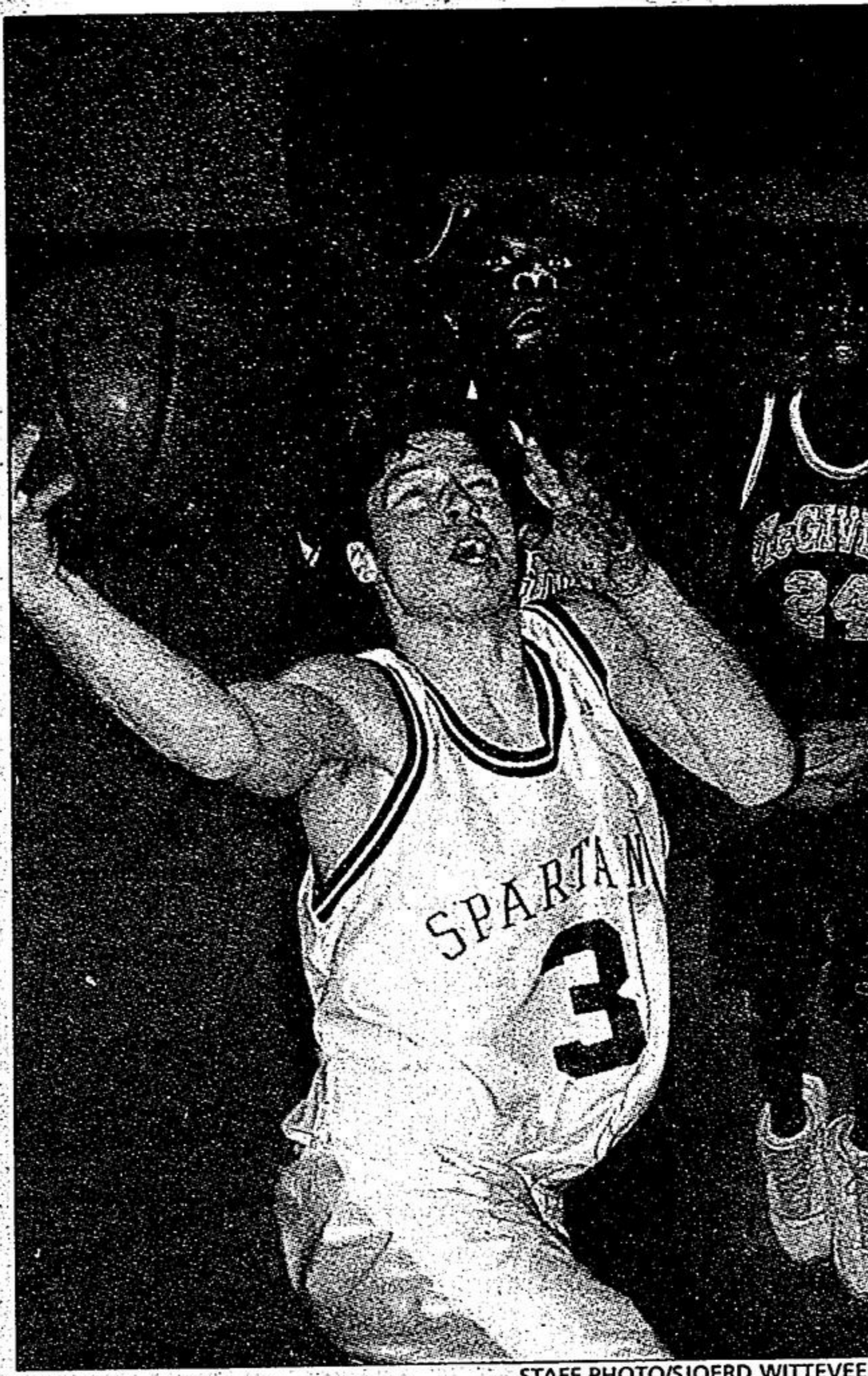
In tuning up for Tuesday's final, the Spartans took part in the Mentor Classic tournament in Mississauga last weekend and settled for second place after being edged 54-52 by Heart Lake Secondary School in the final. Lowrie earned the tournament's most valuable player honours and was high scorer for the Spartans with 24 points. Konga added 14.

The Spartans opened the tournament with a thrilling 53-51 come-from-behind win over host Mentor College. Lowrie led the Spartans with 24 points and scored the game-winning basket on a three-point shot with just seven seconds left.

The Spartans then faced John Cabot in a semi-final game and prevailed 56-49. Lowrie scored 32 points for the Spartans and Timms added 13.

Although the Spartans captured the YRAA tier two title, they don't intend to rest on their laurels. They will compete in the Ontario District High School championships in Listowel next week.

The Spartans will not compete in the Ontario Federation of



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

A determined Father Michael McGivney Academy defender Desmond Rose attempts to block this attempted layup by Stouffville District Secondary School's Tim Lowrie (foreground), during Tuesday's YRAA senior boys' tier two basketball final at Stouffville District Secondary School. The host Spartans won the title 51-40.

School Athletic Associations AAA playdowns. Larger schools in the region are competing for the York AAAA championship and berths at the OFSAA championships.

# Plenty of good sports played at SDSS

BY JIM THOMAS  
Correspondent

All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy and Jill a dull girl. Such can not be said of students attending Stouffville District Secondary School.

The physical education program at SDSS is looked on as one of the best in York Region.

Close to 500 athletes, more than half the total enrollment, are involved in a sport of some kind, many in two or three. To oversee all this requires a staff of six including Jamie Hewitt, the department head, Sharon MacFarlane, Sue LeRoy, Sandy Bush, Steve Shantz, Steve Jimmo plus several volunteers.

A full line of sporting activities is available including - basketball, volleyball, field hockey, football, cross-country, badminton, ice hockey, soccer, rugby, softball and track and field.

Some students are interested only in intramural competition while others lean towards inter-school rivalry. A number play both.

"Intramural games are our strength," MacFarlane says. "While competitive, they're mostly about having fun."

This program comes under the wing of the school's athletic council.

In an effort to create a competitive balance, athletes are divided into a junior (Grades 9 and 10) and senior (Grades 11, 12 and OAC) categories.

With the exception of basketball, intramural sports are co-ed. Teachers too, take part, helping to break down barriers.

Each participant pays a \$2 fee. Funds collected cover the cost of T-shirts for winning teams.

Inter-school competition is organized by Hewitt under the York Region Athletic Association. There are restrictions though, as all participants must meet academic and behavioural standards to qualify.

Moving to Stouffville from Markville Secondary School, MacFarlane wondered if the physical education program here would be comparable. She's been pleasantly surprised.

"We're so fortunate. When students arrive here from elementary feeder schools, they're well prepared," she says.

Because SDSS is smaller in school population, the athletic environment is excellent, she explains. Parental support has also been tremendous.

MacFarlane praises the efforts of the physical education staff, which includes recently retired teacher, Jim Fletcher.

As for herself, "I'm thrilled," she says, "I couldn't be happier."



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