

SPORTS DIGEST

Toronto teams help soccer club mark 25th with new centre

The official opening of the Casey van Maris Soccer Centre and celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Soccer Club will take place Sept. 21 from 1 to 5 p.m.

Among the festivities are an appearance by the Toronto Inferno Women's soccer team, the Toronto Lynx Junior team, York Region all star teams, entertainment by The Toronto Lynx Dancers and mascot, a barbecue, pig roast and beer tent.

The Casey van Maris Soccer Centre is at the Ballantrae Community Centre on Aurora Road. For further information, call (905) 888-9242.

Softball loop serves up breakfast at tournament

The Stouffville Monday-Night Men's Softball League will hold its annual year-end tournament this Saturday at Memorial Park.

Action in the 12-team event is scheduled to begin at 8 a.m. and conclude with the championship game at 3:30 p.m.

During the tournament, the Clever Conductor restaurant — formerly Fullerton's Place — will serve breakfast at 9 a.m. and later lunch and beverages.

As well, the league is looking for players for next season. League spokesperson Kerry Keller notes that each year there's a turnover of players.

"We're not just a league of young guys," he said. "We have guys who are in their 60s who play."

Those wishing further information can contact Keller at (905) 640-7157.

Stouffville team makes hometown hockey final

The Stouffville major novice A Clippers advanced to the final of the Stouffville Early Bird hockey tournament before settling for second-place honours with a 5-3 loss to Orillia in the title tilt Sunday at the Stouffville Arena.

Chris Jupp scored a goal and an assist while Brad Harley and Craig Hasler added singles. Joseph Deveny collected two assists and Matthew Dunlop one.

Mitchell King scored twice to propel Stouffville to a 5-1 win over the LaSalle Sabres in the tourney opener.

Jupp and Hasler contributed a goal and assist each while James Lovett added one goal. Adam Kostandoff drew two assists and Brandon Hughes one.

Backed by a two-goal effort from Deveny and singles from Harley and Hasler, the Clippers then doubled Caledon 4-2. Lovett, Jupp and Hasler drew assists.

Facing the Markham Waxers in their third outing, the Clippers received goals from Alex Popper and King to earn a 2-2 tie. Lovett was credited with one assist.

The Clippers then faced Orillia in their final round-robin outing and lost 5-3. Jupp, King and Kostandoff did the scoring while Hayden Gibson and King had assists.

Based on points collected in the round-robin, Stouffville and Orillia advanced to the final. Clipper goaltenders Conner Timewell and Brandon Francey had outstanding tournaments.

COLLISION COURSE



STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

Randy's Appliances' baserunner Clarissa Gilbert collides with Alison Sanelli of the Stouffville Lioness at home plate during squirt girls' action in the Whitchurch-Stouffville Softball Association tournament Saturday in Stouffville Memorial Park. Randy's won the game and went to win its age group title.

Spirit opens season tonight with salute to emergency workers

Not all of the people in uniform at the Stouffville Spirit's home opener tonight will be hockey players.

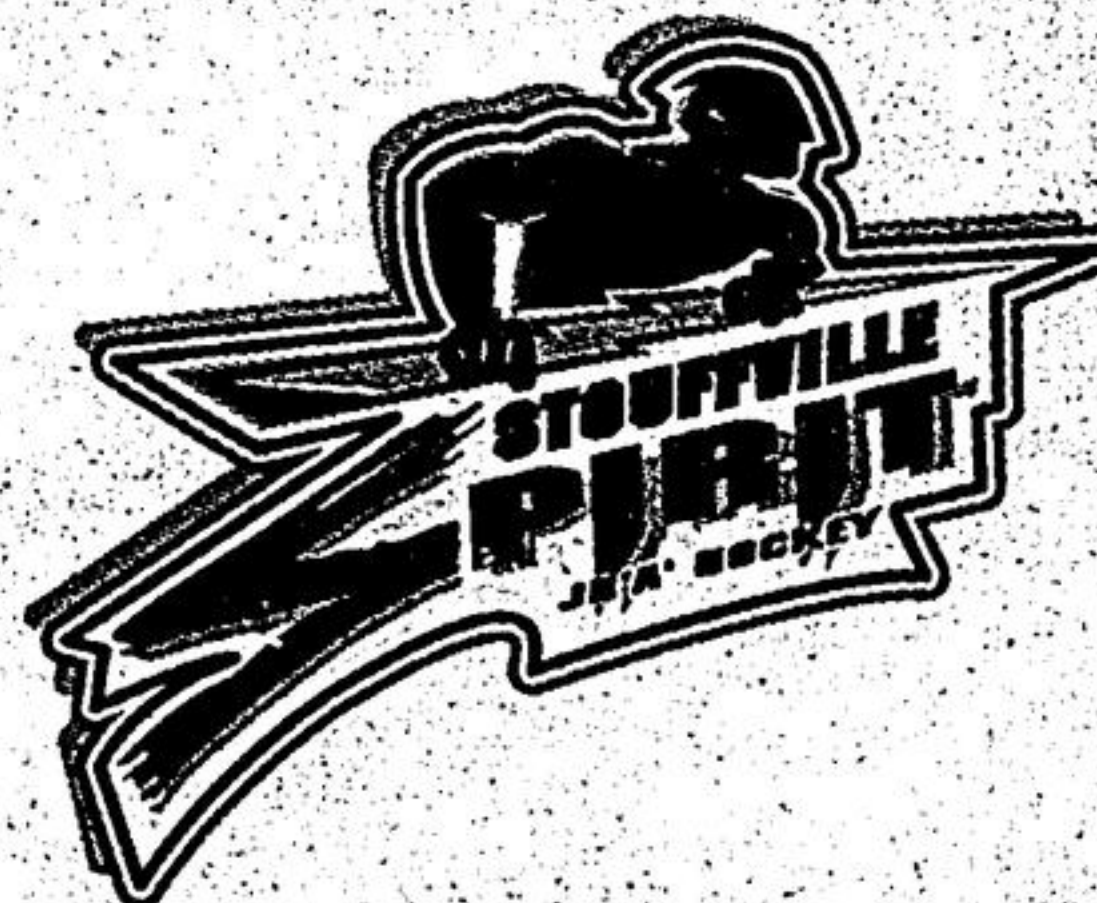
The Spirit hosts the Collingwood Blues in one of four games that kick off the Provincial Junior A Hockey League this evening. Game time is 7:30 at the Stouffville Arena.

Local emergency service workers will be honoured in a pre-game ceremony marking the anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. Representatives from the Whitchurch-Stouffville Fire Department, York Regional Police and York Region EMS will take part.

Spirit players will also present the proceeds — \$1,114 — from their Terry Fox car wash Saturday at Houston Ford. Spirit players will take part in the 10k run on Sunday in Stouffville.

The Spirit returns 10 players from last year's team, including J.D. Smithson, the first five-year player in team history.

There are a record six Stouffville products on this year's Spirit roster. Second-year forward Jordan Mabley is joined by rookies, Mike Sullivan, Kevin Hayward, Cale Tanaka, Lee Maxwell and



Michael Lombardo.

Whitchurch-Stouffville residents Ken Burrows and Brian Perrin return as general manager and head coach, respectively.

The Spirit plays at home every Thursday, excluding Halloween, and on five Saturdays this season. All home games start at 7:30 p.m.

The Spirit opens the road portion of its schedule Friday night in Huntsville. **SPIRITED NOTES:** The Spirit requires volunteers for game-night activities. Call (905) 642-2123 or e-mail spirithockey@hotmail.com for more information.

Fastball MVP likes 'family' atmosphere

BY JIM THOMAS
Correspondent

Chris Burkholder is one of the most sought-after fastball players these days.

For those who play with him or against him recognize his skills, both as a third baseman and a batter with the Stouffville Mennos.

During the past season, he recorded a .361 batting average and a slugging percentage of .676 in 108 at bats, Burkholder recorded 39 hits, six of these home runs.

He also drove in 37 runs with an additional four triples and eight doubles. He walked 14 times.

In the Mennos' march to the Oshawa City and District Fastball League title, Burkholder was voted the championship's Most Valuable Player.

Modest concerning his own achievements, Burkholder said, with the title on the line, everyone did his part. He described pitcher Byron Baranieski as "incredible," throwing 41 innings and winning six of the club's last seven games with an earned run average of 1.17.

A native of Whitchurch-Stouffville, Burkholder grew up at Preston Lake before moving with wife Trish, back to Stouffville where they live with with sons Joshua, 6; Lukas, 4 and Samuel, 2.

Burkholder received his early education at Whitchurch Highlands Public School and later Stouffville District Secondary School where he played fast-ball under coaching and staff teacher Bill McKnight.

He was also a member of the school's golf and badminton teams.

Burkholder looks back on SDSS physical education instructor Dave Connell with great affection.

"He was the best teacher I ever had. He had high expectations of his students. He made everyone want to excel."

Burkholder began his fast-ball career as a pitcher at Vandorf. Later, with dad Howie Burkholder holding the coaching reins and with Scott Evans on the mound, he moved over to shortstop and then to third base. It's at this position he feels most comfortable.

Burkholder's teams have gone to the Ontario and

Canadian finals several times. Both Stouffville bantam and junior clubs won Ontario titles. At the Canadian level, they grabbed a silver and a bronze.

By an odd coincidence, it was former teammate Evans who won it all for Lloydminster, Sask. Evans was picked up by the champs while Burkholder was St. Catharines' choice. The series was hosted by Victoria, B.C.

Burkholder has also starred with the Greenbank Gamblers; the Uxbridge Bandits and Baltimore Selects.

Greenbank won a senior championship and Uxbridge won a provincial. With Uxbridge, Burkholder was also voted the finals' most valuable player.

With Burkholder in the lineup, Baltimore advanced to the world championships, losing 3-0 to New Zealand. The tournament was held at Peterborough.

"To do that well was an accomplishment of which we were all very proud," he claims.

Burkholder says he's pleased to be part of a Mennos team whose roots and traditions are deeply embedded in the community.

"We're a family," he says, "a church-based team with a long history."

It was his father who, along with a cousin, Art Burkholder of Markham, started the Mennos more than 25 years ago. Initially, they played out of a park at Victoria Square.

"My father's my hero," Burkholder says, "everyone's role model."

Burkholder says Mount Albert pitcher Todd Martin is the best he's ever faced; one of the best in the world.

He describes Martin's location as near-perfect with an incredible change-up.

"If he does make a mistake, you still have to catch up with the ball to make contact," he notes.

Burkholder's confident the Mennos will be back next season with his dad and Art Burkholder at the helm.

"We have a terrific fan base," he says, "the best in the league."

On his own future, Burkholder says he may also play senior ball with Pickering but "the Mennos will be my first priority."



CHRIS BURKHOLDER

Father is Stouffville man's hero.