

Stouffville Sports

SPORTS DEADLINE 12 noon, Mondays
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 Tuesday, Feb. 18, 2003
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Spirit, Hurricanes to open semis Thursday

The Stouffville Spirit hopes recent history doesn't repeat itself.

The Spirit meets the Newmarket Hurricanes in the best-of-seven second round of the Provincial Junior A Hockey League playoffs starting Thursday in Newmarket.

Game 2 is tentatively scheduled for Saturday at 4:30 p.m. in Stouffville, with Game 3 Sunday at 7:30 in Newmarket. Game 4 returns to Stouffville, next Tuesday at 8:30 p.m. (Check Thursday's Stouffville Tribune or go to stouffvillespirit.com for updates.)

Newmarket owned the Spirit this season, winning four of six meetings.

Stouffville won the last contest, 5-2 on Feb. 2, but that game was meaningless.

"They've brought out the worst in us this season," acknowledged

Spirit coach Brian Perrin. "I don't know what it's been. Maybe we get too pumped up and then come out flat. We have to learn from those games."

The Hurricanes finished second in the North Conference, six points up on the Spirit.

In the first round of the playoffs, the Spirit swept the Couchiching Terriers in four games.

Newmarket, meanwhile, needed five games to dispose of the Ajax Axemen.

"I think this round will be a lot tougher than the Couch series," Spirit captain J.D. Smithson said. "We've come a long way from the way we played them during the regular season. We'll have to play our best hockey."

The Spirit is led by NHL prospect Kevin Jarman and Mike

Forgie, both of whom will play NCAA Division 1 hockey next season on scholarships.

Newmarket goalie Sean Samuel is also ranked for the 2003 NHL draft and signed to an NCAA scholarship.

In its eight-year history, the Spirit has only played Newmarket once in the playoffs. That was 1990, when the fifth-place Spirit upset the regular season champion Hurricanes in six games in the North semifinals.

"That was something," recalled Smithson, the only Spirit player remaining from that squad.

The Aurora Tigers are waiting to see who they'll play in the other North semifinal. The Collingwood Blues leads the North York Rangers 3-2, with Game 6 tonight in Collingwood.

SPIRIT AT A GLANCE

Stouffville at Newmarket, Thursday, 7:30 p.m. (Game 1)

Newmarket at Stouffville, Saturday, 4:30 p.m. (Game 2)

Stouffville at Newmarket, Sunday, 7:30 p.m. (Game 3)

Newmarket at Stouffville, Tuesday, 8:30 p.m. (Game 4)

*Stouffville at Newmarket, Feb. 27, 7:30 p.m.

*Newmarket at Stouffville, March 1, 8:30 p.m.

*Stouffville at Newmarket, March 2, 7:30 p.m.

Best-of-seven Provincial Junior A Hockey League North Conference semi-finals

*if necessary
 schedule subject to change



SDSS sending three cross-country skiers to OFSAA

The Stouffville District Secondary School Spartans cross-country ski team will send three members to the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Association championships next week after they posted impressive results at the regional finals near Barrie recently.

Brian Lock, a 15-year-old Grade 10 student finished second in the junior

boys' division.

Paul Leslie, an 18-year-old Grade 12 student finished second in the senior boys group.

In the girls' field, Evelyn Leslie, a 14-year-old Grade 9 student was second in the junior competition.

The event, which was held at Hardwood Hills, included students from the Lake Ontario Secondary School Athletic Association and Georgian Bay Athletic Association.

In explaining his team's success, SDSS coach Scott

Croucher was quick to point out the three competitors are members of a junior national team developmental squad, which regularly works out at Hardwood Hills.

"It's definitely an advantage," he said of the trio training with the national developmental team. "They train at Hardwood for almost the entire year and it's pretty intense training that they do."

The OFSAA championships will be held in the Ottawa-Hull region Feb. 24-25.



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