

## SPORTS

## Senior Spartans spiked by Huron Heights in York volleyball final

Jim Fletcher felt his Stouffville District Secondary School Spartans senior boys' volleyball team had ample opportunity to win Monday's York Region Athletic Association championship against host Huron Heights Secondary School.

The Spartans head coach felt his club outplayed the Newmarket high school in most facets of the game.

But there was one aspect which might have spelled the difference in his club's 3-1 loss — serving.



"They beat us on service," Fletcher said. "We lost the game because we didn't serve tough enough and, with rally point, that's it."

"But at least we got the silver medal. There's not too many teams that can do that," he said.

Losing the first game of the best-of-five affair 25-17, the Spartans were within a point of evening the match as they held a 24-20 lead.

But Huron Heights rallied with six unanswered points to win the second game 26-24.

The Spartans came back to win the third game 25-23, but lost the fourth game 25-23.

"It was a tough go," Fletcher said. "I thought we outplayed them. We beat them on defence and we blocked them."

## OFSAA BID STILL ON LINE

Despite the loss, the Spartans season wasn't over. They were in the hunt for a berth in the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Association AA championships.

The Spartans won the York Region AA title with a 3-0 victory (25-20, 25-21, 26-24) over host Sutton District High School Friday.

The Spartans were to host the G.L. Roberts Secondary School Lakers (Oshawa), winners of the Lake Ontario Secondary School Athletic Association AA title, in a best-of-five match for the OFSAA

bid yesterday at Stouffville.

The OFSAA AA playdowns will be held in Mississauga Nov. 21 and 22.

## SPARTANS HOSTS MILLENNIUM CUP VOLLEYBALL EVENT SATURDAY

The Spartans will host their annual Millennium Cup Tournament Saturday at Stouffville Secondary from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The event will feature teams comprised of former Spartan volleyball players.

## Hockey Spartans hosting early bird tourney at arena

The Stouffville District Secondary School Spartans senior boys' hockey team will host an eight-team early bird tournament today and Friday at the Stouffville Arena.

The final is slated to begin at 3 p.m. Friday.

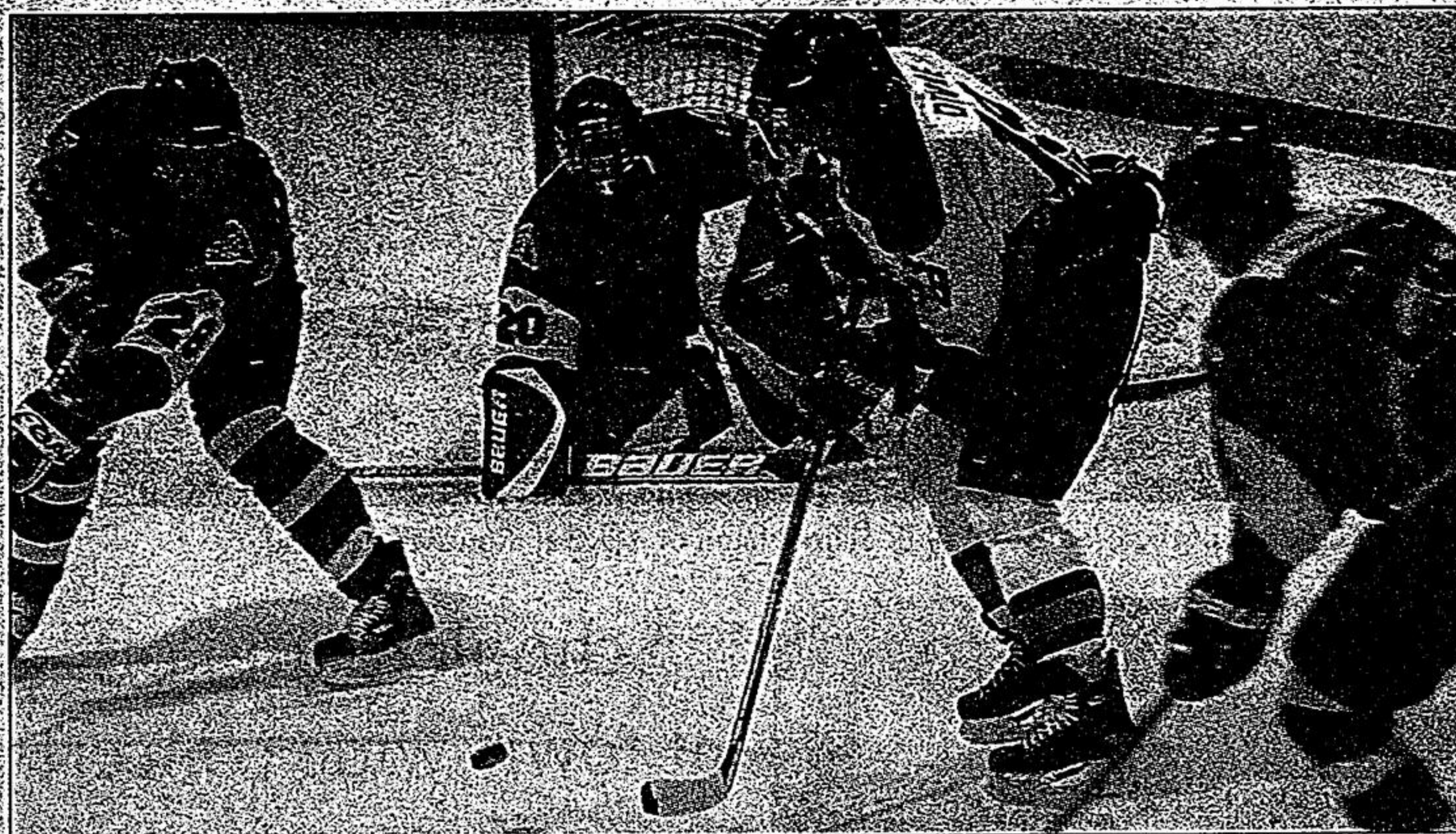
## Junior football champions have Stouffville connection

Markham's Brother Andre Catholic High School Cardinals junior boys' football team captured the York Region Athletic Association title Saturday with a 41-22 win over St. Thomas of Villanova Knights at York University.

Head coach Rick Maloney and several of his Cardinal players are Stouffville residents.

Ted Fair-Gogek, a second-year running back, scored four touchdowns on runs of 30, 20, 35 and 40 yards, a two-point convert. Russel Jackson-Wyatt and Chris Normandeau added the other majors. Paul Lefave booted three converts.

With the victory, the Cardinals advanced to the inaugural Junior Metro Bowl playdowns and were scheduled to face the St. Michael's College School Kerry Blues yesterday in the first round of the playoffs at St. Michael's in Toronto.



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Stouffville Spirit's Carson Devine (white uniform) tries to corral the puck in first period action during last Thursday's Provincial Junior A Hockey League contest against the Couchiching Terriers at the Stouffville Arena. The Spirit lost 4-3 but beat the Pickering Panthers 5-0 at home Saturday. Surrounding Devine are (from far left) Justin Sawyer, Mike Thomson and Peter Dekker. The Spirit plays host to the Ajax Axemen tonight at 7:30 p.m.

## Spirit to face one less rival as Huntsville shuts down

Suddenly, the Stouffville Spirit has a night off tomorrow and two cancelled home dates later this season.

The sad sack Huntsville Wildcats are ceasing operations for the remainder of the 2003-03 Provincial Junior A Hockey League season, the team announced Tuesday.

Spirit general manager Ken Burrows was awaiting official notification from the Ontario Hockey Association Tuesday night, but a planned road trip to Huntsville Friday appears out.

The winless Wildcats (0-23-0) were scheduled to play in Stouffville Dec. 4 and Jan. 15. All games will likely be defaulted.

Huntsville's board of directors met Sunday to approve selling the team to a group led by ex-NHLer Tom McCarthy and Sherry Bassin, of the Ontario

Hockey League's Erie Otters.

The new ownership team met with the OHA in the preceding week to discuss the options for the team, including the acquisition of additional players to complete the season, reads a statement on the Wildcats web site.

"The OHA presented the option of having the Wildcats take a leave of absence for the remainder of the 2003-2004 season and then resuming hockey operations for the 2004-2005 season," it read.

The board approved the plan unanimously.

## TEAM TO BE RE-NAMED

The Huntsville team will be re-named and affiliated with Erie for next season.

Players from this year's team will be moved to other teams where possible.

The Wildcats allowed an average of 9.09 goals against this season while scoring only 1.8.

Coming off one of its best games of the season, the Spirit hosts the Ajax Axemen tonight at the Stouffville Arena at 7:30. Ajax (4-15-1-2) is in last place in the South Conference.

The Spirit (13-9-1-0) is in third place in the North.

## SPIRIT-TAME PANTHERS

Jake Van-Allen scored twice and Neil Conway earned the shutout as the Spirit dumped the visiting Pickering Panthers 5-0 Saturday.

Rob Groom, Michael Commisso and Rick Schrank accounted for the other goals. Carson Devine and Ty Raine had two assists each.

The Spirit is scheduled to play at Vaughan Monday starting at 7:15 p.m.

## Steckley has special reason to complete next year's Boston Marathon

BY JIM THOMAS  
Correspondent

A 45-year-old Stouffville mother of twins has qualified for the 108th running of the Boston Marathon next April.

Robin Steckley will be one of 12,000 entered in what is described as the ultimate in road racing. Her husband John and children Kate and Joe will be among the more than one million onlookers watching from the sidelines.

The route covers 26 miles and 385 yards (42,195 kilometres).

To gain acceptance, Steckley had to equal or better a specified time at a previous event. This she did, running three hours, 48.59 minutes in Ottawa in May. The minimum to qualify was three hours, 50 minutes.

## RAN WITH CONFIDENCE

"At the half-way point, I knew I could do it," the 110-pound speedster said. "It was exciting and fun."

She sprinted the last 300 meters just to make sure.

A runner in her teens, Steckley began taking the sport seriously

again 10 years ago. She's often seen running on Stouffville's back streets or as far away as Unionville.

"It's a habit," she says. "I love it, particularly in the winter with a fresh layer of snow on the ground."

Most motorists, she says, are co-operative, allowing her lots of running room.

While winning in Boston would be a great experience, Steckley claims that, for her, just taking part is something she'll never forget.

The entry fee is \$180 US.

## HELP FOR AFRICANS

For Steckley, it's a win-win situation. Every cent she collects in donor pledges will go to the Urafiki Health Centre in Igoma, Tanzania, through Stouffville Missionary Church.

It was back in 1998 that several people from in the congregation constructed a clinic there. A group returned five years later and set it up as a medical unit. A licence to practice was approved in 2003, with full operation expected this fall.

Steckley hopes to raise \$2,000 that will go towards the purchase of four blood pressure kits. The Missionary church, where the Steckley family attends, will issue donation receipts.

Marathon officials have given Steckley's project their stamp of approval.

Steckley admits that, until recently, she never thought qualifying for the Boston event attainable. She gives credit to Stouffville running guru Fred Robbins for his encouragement.

"Now is the time," she says.