

# SPORTS

## Spirit prepares for tough grind

*Jr. A team plays three big games in four days starting tonight with Aurora*

The pre-Christmas vacation for the Stouffville Spirit ends tonight.

After playing just one game in the last 11 days, the Spirit should be heavily tested in three contests over the next four nights.

It starts tonight with the Aurora Tigers, the top-ranked team in the Canadian Junior A Hockey League, at the Stouffville Arena at 7:30.

Aurora (32-1-0-0) is in first place in the North Conference of the Provincial Junior A Hockey League. The Spirit (21-11-0-0) is in third. See standings on page 25.

The Spirit visits the South Conference's Thornhill Major Islanders Saturday. Thornhill (13-14-4-0) beat the Spirit 5-2 Nov. 27 in Stouffville.

The Newmarket Hurricanes (25-6-1-0), in second in the North Conference host the Spirit Sunday night. The Spirit is 1-3-0 against Newmarket this year.

Newmarket, unbeaten in 12 games, hosts Wexford tonight and plays at Aurora Friday. Newmarket is the only team to beat Aurora this season.

"Through this streak we've beaten some darned good teams, but at the same time it's good to get back with the Wexfords, Auroras and Stouffvilles," said Newmarket head coach Brad Selwood. "We need to play those better teams to improve."

### SPIRIT TAMES PANTHERS IN PICKERING

The Spirit spanked the Pickering Panthers 6-2 Friday at the Pickering Recreation Complex.

After trailing 1-0 at the end of the first period, the Spirit scored six straight goals. Pat Leone, acquired from the Vaughan Vipers last month, scored twice. Kevin Hayward, Cale Tanaka, Rick Schrank and Kevin Lord had the other goals.

Shane Baxter and Jake Van Allen had two assists each. Neil Conway earned the win for the Spirit, who outshot Pickering 35-16.

Leone, a former Hurricane, was named first star of the game and Lord second star by Panthers personnel.

**SPIRITED NOTES:** Spirit forward Randy Johnston was one of three junior A players called up to the injury-riddled Ottawa 67's last weekend. Drafted by Ottawa this year, the Newmarket resident played in losses to St. Mike's and London. He was back with the Spirit Monday; the Spirit took part in Saturday's Stouffville Kinsmen Santa Claus Parade and held its team Christmas party Monday at The Other Office.

For more Spirit information visit [www.stouffvillespirit.com](http://www.stouffvillespirit.com)

## Atom Clippers on roll after third straight win

The Stouffville atom Clippers posted three victories in recent minor hockey action, defeating Beeton 4-1, Markham 4-3 and Newmarket 4-2.

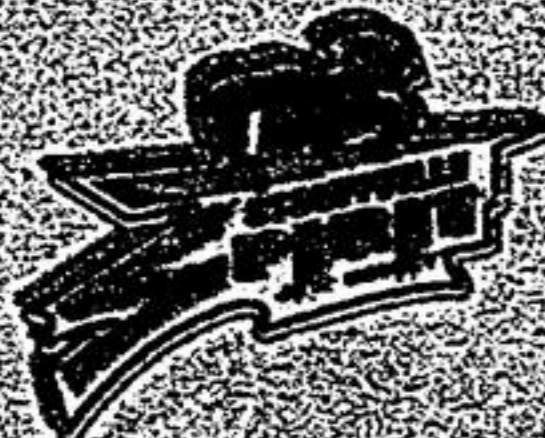
Twins Robbie and Elise Acton, Steven Tait, and Curtis Crago each scored once for the Clippers in their win over Beeton.

Connor Cadaret, Tait, and Josh Machesney drew assists.

In their win over Markham, Michael Bourgeois, Wesley Brown, Crago, and Machesney each delivered one goal.

Wes Brown, Machesney and Dalton Mayo earned assists.

Against Newmarket, Crago and Machesney each had a goal and one assist while Cadaret and Chris Smith added single tallies. Elise Acton and Robbie Acton drew assists.



## Spartans make statement at Brother Andre hockey tourney

*SDSS defeats five-time defending YRAA champions twice to win Markham tournament title*

When the Stouffville District Secondary School Spartans senior boys hockey team entered last week's Brother Andre Catholic High School Invitational Tournament in Markham, it was searching for an answer.

The Spartans hoped to see how they measure up against the host Cardinals, a team that has won the York Region Athletic Association title the last five seasons.

When the two-day tournament concluded Friday, the Spartans got a positive response.

And not just once, in a 6-3 victory over the Cardinals in a round-robin game Thursday.

The following day, the same two teams met in the championship final at Mount Joy Arena.

And for a second straight occasion, the Spartans prevailed 5-3.

*"We came into this looking for a few measuring sticks."*

"We came into this looking for a few measuring sticks," said an elated Spartans head coach Jamie Hewitt. "If you look at the York Region hockey trophy, Brother Andre has won it five years in a row. In the five years that I've been here at Stouffville and coaching hockey, I've never beaten a Brother Andre team in senior hockey."

"Yesterday (Thursday's) win was huge for our program in that we were down 3-2 entering the third period before we came back. I told our kids in the dressing room between the second and third period that we were a good team and we had character. The character of this team showed again (Friday). They're committed and things are coming together," he said.

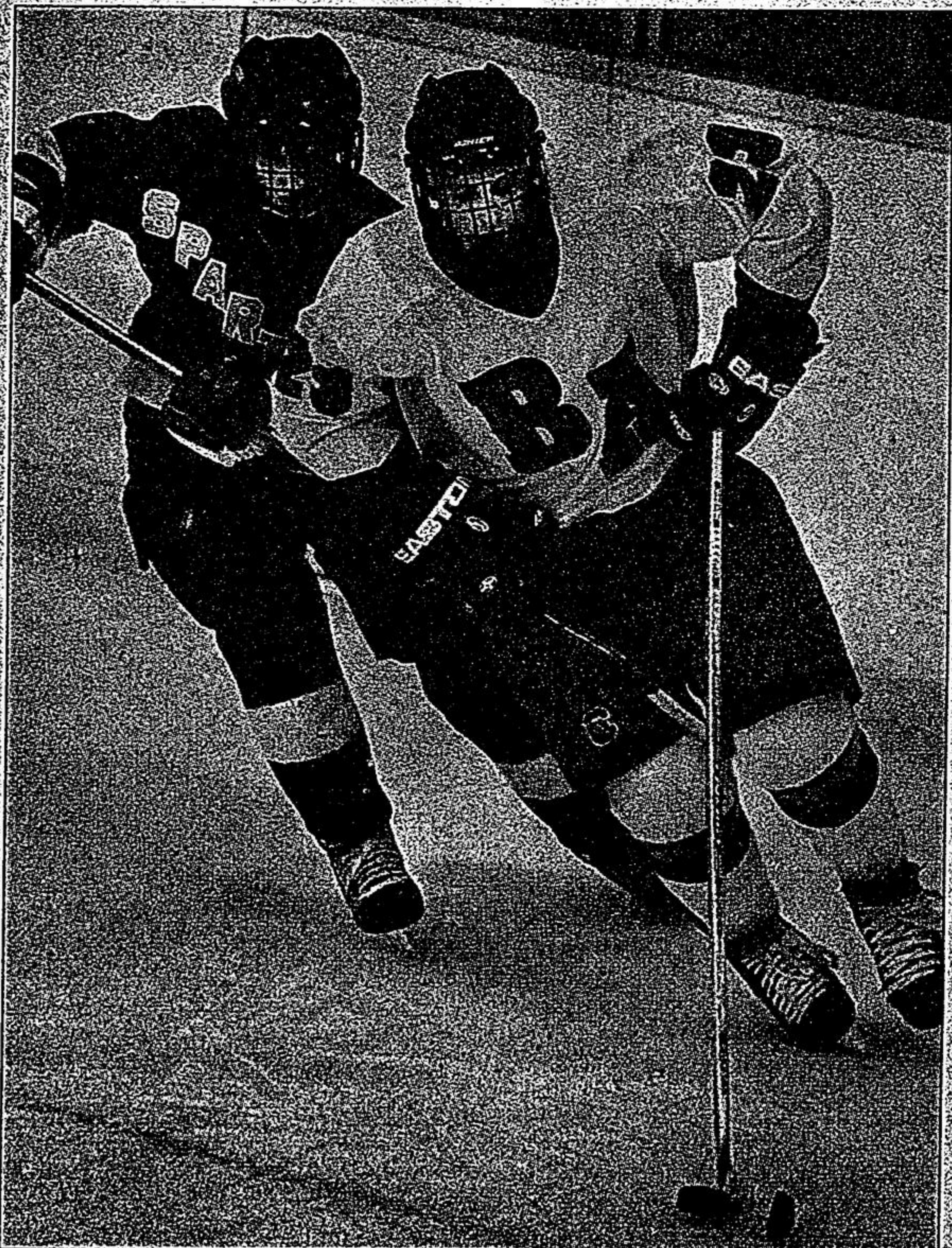
### TOTAL TEAM EFFORT

Hewitt thought his club's success stemmed from its ability to play as an unselfish team.

"The guys are all in it for each other. If I had to give out an MVP in the tournament, I couldn't. I would need an award for every single player," he said.

In Friday's final, the Spartans were also forced to play catch-up hockey as they trailed 2-0 early in the first period.

A goal late in the first seemed to give the Spartans some momentum as they scored twice in the second period to take a 3-2 lead, which they never relinquished.



STAFF PHOTO/BILL ROBERTS

Stouffville District Secondary School Spartans' Alex Bruno (left) tries to impede the progress of Brother Andre Catholic High School Cardinals' puck carrier Adrian Gallardo during Thursday's round-robin game of the Brother Andre tournament at Markham's Mount Joy Arena. The Spartans won this game 6-3 and beat the host Cardinals in Friday's final 5-3.

Corey Tanaka scored twice for the Spartans while Justin Hitchen, Matt Mulder and Mark Sullivan added singles.

### PERFECT ROUND-ROBIN

The Spartans reached the final after going undefeated in round-robin action as they turned back Brother Andre 6-3, Westmount Collegiate (Thornhill) 6-2, Mary Ward Catholic High School (Scarborough) 7-2 and Anderson Collegiate (Whitby) 5-2 in their semi-final game.

While happy with the tournament victory, Hewitt still maintains his club has some areas of concern, especially slow starts.

In each of their tournament games, the Spartans were forced to overcome a 1-0 deficit.

"Hewitt can't explain it. We still have a lot of work to do, but I'm proud of the way our guys played in this tournament. It's definitely a big win for our program."

### Spartans win Friendship Game at Port Perry basketball tourney

The Stouffville District Secondary School Spartans senior boys basketball team captured the Friendship Game title at the Port Perry High School Tournament Saturday with a 48-42 win over Kenner Collegiate of Peterborough.

Mike Devries, a first-year player, led the Spartans with 32 points in the win.

The Spartans lost their first two games of the tournament, to host Port Perry 50-40 and Uxbridge Secondary School 48-42.

### BEAT SUTTON IN LEAGUE OPENER

The Spartans opened their YRAA tier two league schedule with a 45-39 road win over Sutton District High School.

Justin Reesor and Justin Brugger were high scorers for the Spartans with 16 points apiece.