

# SPORTS

## Hughes, Ontario win gold at world under-17 tourney

BY JIM MASON  
Staff Writer

While the Canadian junior hockey team was losing the world championship final Monday, another squad was returning to Ontario with gold medals from a prestigious international puck event.

Team Ontario, including four York Region residents, defeated Team Pacific 5-2 Sunday in the final of the World Under-17 Hockey Challenge in St. John's, Nfld.

Holland Landing's Kyle Lamb scored two power play goals in front of a sell-out crowd of 6,247 at Mile One Arena.

"It was absolutely amazing," said Lamb, a five-foot, 11-inch tall rookie defenceman with the Sudbury Wolves of the Ontario Hockey League, who was named Ontario's player of the game.

"Our team came together really quickly and wanted it more, I guess."

The annual tournament had 10 teams, including national squads from Russia, Finland, USA, Germany and Czech Republic plus five regional teams from Canada.

Also on the Ontario roster was Steve Downie of Queensville. The Windsor Spitfire winger played with Lamb for



**BOBBY HUGHES:** Kingston Frontenacs forward earns praise from coach of championship team from Ontario.

four years in the York-Simcoe Express AAA hockey program.

Andrew Cogliano of Woodbridge was second in tournament scoring with 12 points. A rookie with the St. Michael's Buzzers of the Ontario Provincial Junior A Hockey League, he has accepted a scholarship to the University of Michigan starting in 2005.

Stouffville's Bobby Hughes, who

plays for the Kingston Frontenacs of the OHL, was the other York Region resident on the squad.

"All four of the players (from York) were fantastic," said Ontario coach Bob Jones, who is also associate of the St. Michael's Majors of the OHL.

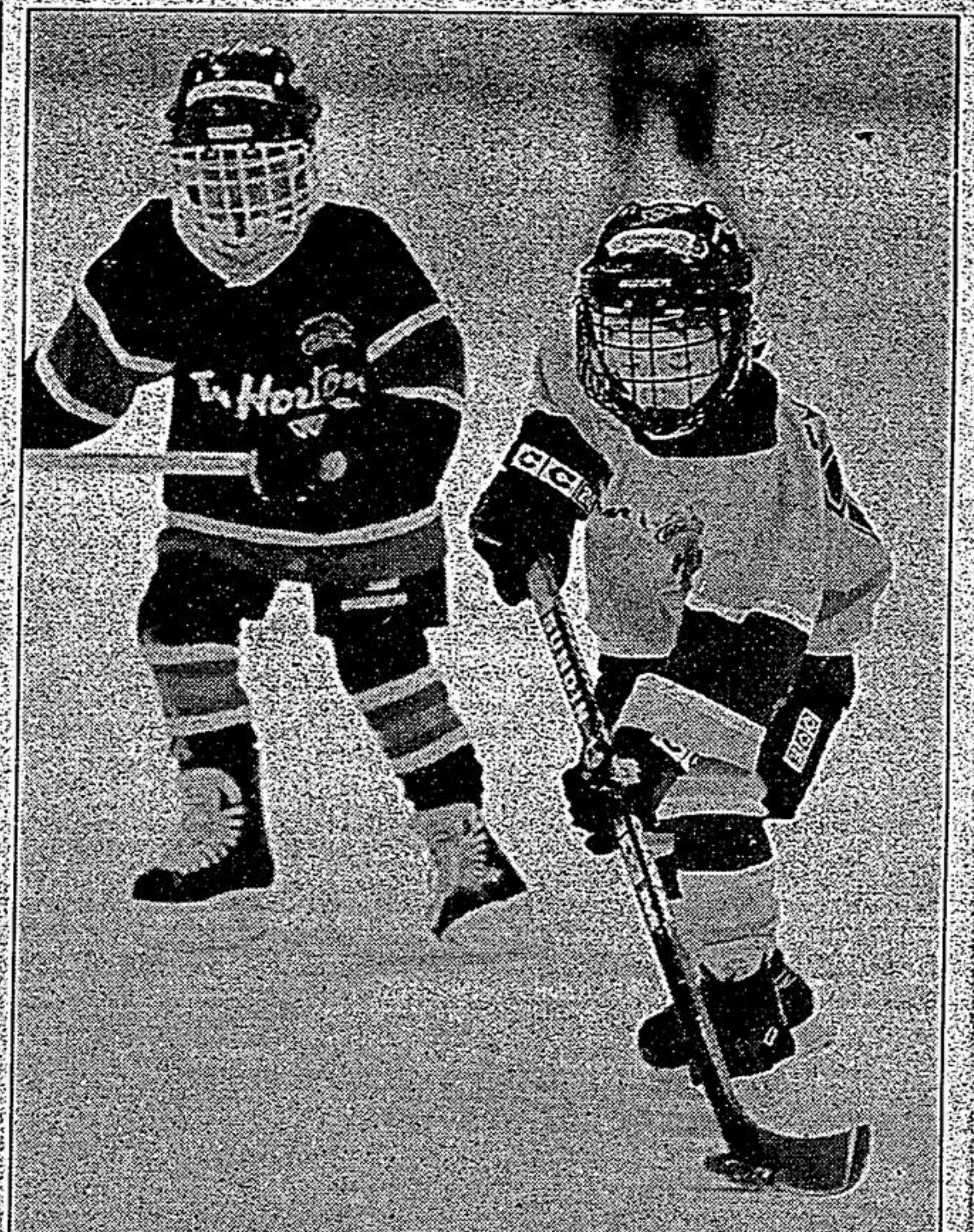
"Bobby Hughes is a great kid, a hard worker who plays both ends of the ice well. He was a pleasure to have on our team."

Ontario was 2-0-1 in the round robin portion of the tournament before beating Quebec 2-1 in the semifinals.

While waiting for their flight in the St. John's airport, the Ontario players caught the opening minutes of Canada's 4-3 loss to the USA in the gold medal game of the world junior championships in Finland.

There is a connection. Fifteen members of the 2003 Canadian junior team were under-17 tourney alumnus.

NHLers who played in the tourney when they were teens include Mats Sundin (Toronto Maple Leafs), Ilya Kovalchuk (Atlanta Thrashers), Joe Thornton (Boston Bruins), Jarome Iginla (Calgary Flames) and Radek Bonk (Ottawa Senators).



STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

### Full speed ahead

Christopher Evelyn, right, attempts to manoeuvre past Blake Hembruff during the Whitchurch-Stouffville Minor Hockey Association's annual Christmas house league tournament at the Stouffville Arena.

## Spirit in tough tonight with nation's No. 1 team in town

The Stouffville Spirit didn't kick off the new year well and the hangover could easily continue tonight at the Stouffville Arena.

The Spirit, which lost 5-2 to the Oshawa Legionaires Saturday, hosts the Aurora Tigers tonight at 7:30 p.m.

Aurora (39-2-0-0), in first place in the North Conference of the Provincial Junior A

Hockey League, is the top-ranked team in Canada. Its only two losses were to the second-place Newmarket Hurricanes (29-10-1-0). The Spirit (24-15-1-0) is in third place.

The Spirit looked listless at the Oshawa Civic Auditorium Saturday, falling behind 3-0. Hitting three posts in the first period didn't help.

The Spirit made it 3-2, on goals by Jeff

Moor and Rob Groom, but a pair of empty-netters snuffed out the comeback.

Aurora features a lineup stocked with 17 20-year-olds including former Spirit players Jamie Minchella and Sean Scully.

**SPIRITED NOTES:** Restarting the dormant Huntsville Wildcats franchise for next fall is not going smoothly. New owners Sherry Bassin and Tom McCarthy can't

come to terms with town officials over arena rental rates and concession rights. The team does have a new name, Huntsville Muskoka Otters. Bassin also co-owns the Erie Otters of the Ontario Hockey League. McCarthy is a former NHLer... tonight's game is Orchard Park Public School night. Spirit players visited students at the Stouffville school yesterday.

## Revived Spartan girls puck program showing good early signs

After a five-year absence, girls hockey making comeback at Stouffville Secondary

BY JIM THOMAS  
Correspondent

Move over guys. The undisputed sports scene of Stouffville, District Secondary School hockey has been challenged.

By girls. A 15-member team has entered this season's York Region Athletic Association girls' varsity hockey league.

And to date, the team has enjoyed commendable results.

In its first seven outings, all against much larger schools, the squad recorded three wins and four losses, a result that's raising

eyebrows everywhere it plays.

Entered in the highly competitive tier I division, the hard-driving Spartans must go up against entries including defending YRAA champion Markham District High School, Huron Heights, Sacred Heart, Newmarket High, Aurora High, Dr. J.M. Denison and Cardinal Carter.

Six of the seven teams will qualify for playoffs.

The Spartans are coached by teachers Brian Shankman and Dan McConnachie.

"Stouffville has tried for the past four years to put a team together, but there wasn't sufficient interest," Mr. McConnachie said.

"This year, it's different."

### INJECTION OF YOUTH

Helping make the team a reality is the enthusiasm shown from the five Grade 9 students on the roster.

The girls use old uniforms for home contests and purchased new ones, with their own money, for away games. Mr. Shankman said: The school covers the cost of referees and transportation.

The regular schedule includes 12 games plus an exhibition series with Uxbridge Secondary School and a tournament at York University.

To advance to the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Association playdowns, Stouffville must defeat a AA school from Durham Region. In York Region, the other rivals are larger AAA schools.

In addition to improved physi-

cal fitness, competition tends to break down student-teacher barriers, Mr. Shankman thinks.

Team practices are held at 7:30 a.m., but no one complains, he said.

The players' parents have been supportive and the school's athletic department is also behind the team 100 per cent, the coaches say.

Because most players are already engaged in rep or house league hockey, they're very familiar with the game.

"There's a great range of talent," Mr. McConnachie said. "Hopefully, we can build on the successes of this season."

The team roster includes Liz Knox, Lauren Craig-Ellis, Erin Pappas, Rebecca Pappas, Hayley Hughes, Katelyn Cartwright, Kelly Greig, Karli Zeigler, Ashley McLellan, Laurie McLellan, Kim

Bound, Kendall Knox, Kate Devine, Cassie Sparks and Cindy Schickedanz.

### Spartan boys share top spot

The Spartans senior boys hockey team ran its YRAA unbeaten string to five games just prior to the Christmas holiday break with a 5-2 road win over St. Robert Catholic High School of Thornhill.

Gabe Barnett, Corey Tanaka, Jordan Smalley, Alex Bruno and Jon Wonch each scored once for the Spartans, now 4-0-1 in league play and tied for first in the east division with Unionville High School.

The Spartans resume league play Tuesday when they play St. Augustine Catholic High School of Unionville at the Stouffville Arena at 2:30 p.m.

