

Stouffville Sun-Tribune

SPORTS

Spartan seniors rally twice to earn first-ever berth in York hockey final

SDSS to meet Cardinal Carter in best-of-three set

With the best overall record in the York Region Athletic Association, it might be assumed the Stouffville District Secondary School Spartans senior boys' hockey team would blaze an easy trail into the final.

The Spartans did manage to secure their first-ever berth in the best-of-three championship, which begins tomorrow at the Stouffville Arena.

But it wasn't an easy task.

Facing the Markham District High School Marauders in a best-of-three semifinal series, the Spartans were upended in the series opener Friday 5-3 in Stouffville.

In the second game Monday at Mount Joy Arena in Markham, the Spartans were on the brink of elimination as they went into two periods of sudden death overtime before emerging with a 4-3 victory.

With all of the marbles on the line Tuesday at Stouffville Arena, the Spartans were forced to play catch-up hockey for two-thirds of the game, before emerging with a 6-4 victory and a date with the Cardinal Carter Catholic High School Celtics (Aurora) in the final.

After Friday's first game, the series resumes Tuesday at Bond

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They don't panic.

Lake Arena at 2 p.m. A third game, if required, would return to Stouffville Arena at a date yet to be determined as of press time.

"The guys certainly don't make things easy," said Jamie Hewitt, Spartans head coach.

In explaining how his club managed to overcome adversity, Hewitt said it stems from the character it developed throughout the season.

This was clearly evident in the two victories.

In Monday's second game, the Spartans could easily have folded the tent when the Marauders tied the game with just under one minute remaining in regulation time to force overtime.

The Spartans, however, regrouped and eventually won the game in the second five-minute sudden-death overtime session on a goal from Gabe Barnett and just



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Markham District High School Marauders' goalkeeper Matt Chase stops this scoring attempt off the stick of Stouffville District Secondary School Spartans' Chris Flanagan during action in Friday's York Region Athletic Association senior boys' hockey semifinal game at the Stouffville Arena. Although the Spartans lost 5-3, they rallied to win the next two contests in the best-of-three series 4-3 in overtime Monday and 6-4 Tuesday to earn a berth in the finals against Cardinal Carter Catholic High School (Aurora). The best-of-three series begins tomorrow at Stouffville Arena at 1 p.m. and resumes at Bond Lake Arena Tuesday.

moments after the Marauders failed to cash in on a goal-mouth scramble at the other end of the rink.

THIRD-PERIOD RALLY

Continuing to exhibit their resolve in Tuesday's game, the Spartans overcame one-goal deficits through the first and second period and erupted for two quick goals within the first minute of the third period to take the lead for good.

"The guys just didn't quit, they kept plugging away. They don't panic," Hewitt said. "They got the job done. They're a very committed group and try to play within our system. Everything you ask of them they do."

Matt Mulder scored twice for the Spartans in Tuesday's deciding game while Mark Sullivan, Barnett, Jordan Artindale and Chris Flanagan added singles.

Also scoring for the Spartans in Monday's dramatic victory were Flanagan, Corey Tanaka and Nick Hawkins.

Norm Fretz, Jordan Smalley and Josh Spang accounted for the Spartans' goals in the first game.

Hewitt was also quick to praise the work of goalie Shawn Gibson throughout the series.

Especially in Tuesday's game in the third period in which he stopped a breakaway with the

Spartans precariously hanging onto a 4-3 lead.

CELTICS WILL BE TOUGH FOE

Looking ahead to the final, Hewitt said it won't be easy to defeat the Celtics, a team that finished first in the west division.

The two teams are familiar with each other having met two times in tournament play. Each team posted a victory.

"They're a very talented team," Hewitt said of the Celtics. "They did well in the Father Goetz tournament and we didn't. They've played a lot of hockey, more than we have this year. For us to win, we have to play systems that we've taught them."

Spartan seniors spike third at YRAA playdowns

The Stouffville District Secondary School Spartans senior girls' volleyball team posted a third-place finish at Tuesday's YRAA playdowns at Stouffville District Secondary School.

After defeating Toronto District Christian High School 2-0, the Spartans lost matches to Aurora High School, who finished first in the pool, and Vaughan Secondary School by identical 2-0 scores.

Unionville High School and Huron Heights were the top two teams from the playdowns and

will meet in Friday's final at Huron Heights.

The Spartans, however, will face Sutton District High School for the YRAA-AA title today at Sutton.

The winner will meet the Lake Ontario Secondary School Athletic Association-AA winner for the right to earn a berth at the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Association-AA playdowns.

Spartan girls fielding award at school board meeting

The Stouffville District Secondary School Spartans girls' field hockey team will be recognized by the York Region Athletic Association today.

The defending YRAA champions were given the sportsmanship award during their participation at the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Association championships in early November.

The Spartans will be honoured during the YRAA board's meeting.

Spartans to hold court

The Stouffville District Secondary School senior boys' basketball team will tip off their YRAA tier two playoff schedule Friday with a road game at Unionville High School starting at 4 p.m.

Hurricanes capitalize on Spirit miscues

Stouffville trails series 2-0; third game tonight in Newmarket

It's not a must-win for the Stouffville Spirit tonight, but it's darn close.

The Spirit trails the Newmarket Hurricanes 2-0 in their best-of-seven Provincial Jr. A Hockey League North Conference semifinal.

They can lose tonight (game time 7:30 at the Ray Twinney arena in Newmarket) but would then need the unlikely scenario of four straight wins over an older and healthier Newmarket squad.

Game 4 will be played Friday at 7:30 p.m. in Stouffville. Players from the Witchurch-Stouffville Minor Hockey Association and Markham-Stouffville Girls Hockey Association wearing their team jerseys will be admitted free.

If necessary, Game 5 will be played Sunday in Newmarket, with Game 6 Monday in Stouffville and the seventh game Tuesday in Newmarket.

The Spirit lost 5-2 Sunday at home in Game 2 despite outshooting Newmarket 26-24.

Jordan Mabley scored and then assisted on Jake Van Allen's goal for the Spirit in front of a season-high crowd of 600 at the Stouffville Arena.

The score was tied 1-1 after the first period and Newmarket led 3-1 after two.

The Spirit thought it had made it 3-2, but a goal was waved off when a Newmarket player pushed the net off its pegs.

An empty-net goal in the final minute completed the scoring.

"I think our team has played pretty well," Spirit head coach Brian Perrin said. "What's hurting us is our lack of maturity. And Newmarket has been able to capitalize on those mistakes."

"But our focus has to remain positive. A goal here or there and we could be leading the series 2-0."

For more information on the Spirit, log on to: www.stouffvillespirit.com



JORDAN MABLEY, Stouffville native scores a goal and earns an assist for Spirit in Sunday's 5-2 loss against Newmarket.