

SPORTS

Spirit find groove, reel off 3 straight wins

Aurora Tigers to face Spirit tonight at Stouffville Arena

The music blasted from the Stouffville Spirit dressing room, as smiling players shared a joke in the hallway of the Stouffville Arena Monday night.

What a difference a week makes.

The Spirit, which opened the Provincial Jr. A Hockey League season with three losses, reeled off three smile-producing wins in the past week.

"We should have won two of those first two, but just couldn't get anything going," Spirit captain Michael Lombardo said.

"Now it's coming together. From the goalies out, everyone knows what they're doing and if they don't, someone reminds them."

At 18, Lombardo is a grizzled three-year veteran on team whose average age is 17 1/2 years old.

"We're young again this year, but what we have over



ROB GROOM : Scored a goal and two assists in Spirit's 6-4 road win Sunday over the Wexford Raiders.

last year is heart," he said. "Everyone on this team is taking this year very seriously."

The Spirit defeated the Wexford Raiders 6-4 in Scarborough Sunday, Collingwood Blues 6-4 in Collingwood Friday and the Couchiching Terriers 2-1 last Thursday at home.

The Spirit hosts the defending national champion Aurora Tigers at 7:30 p.m., then visits Huntsville tomorrow.

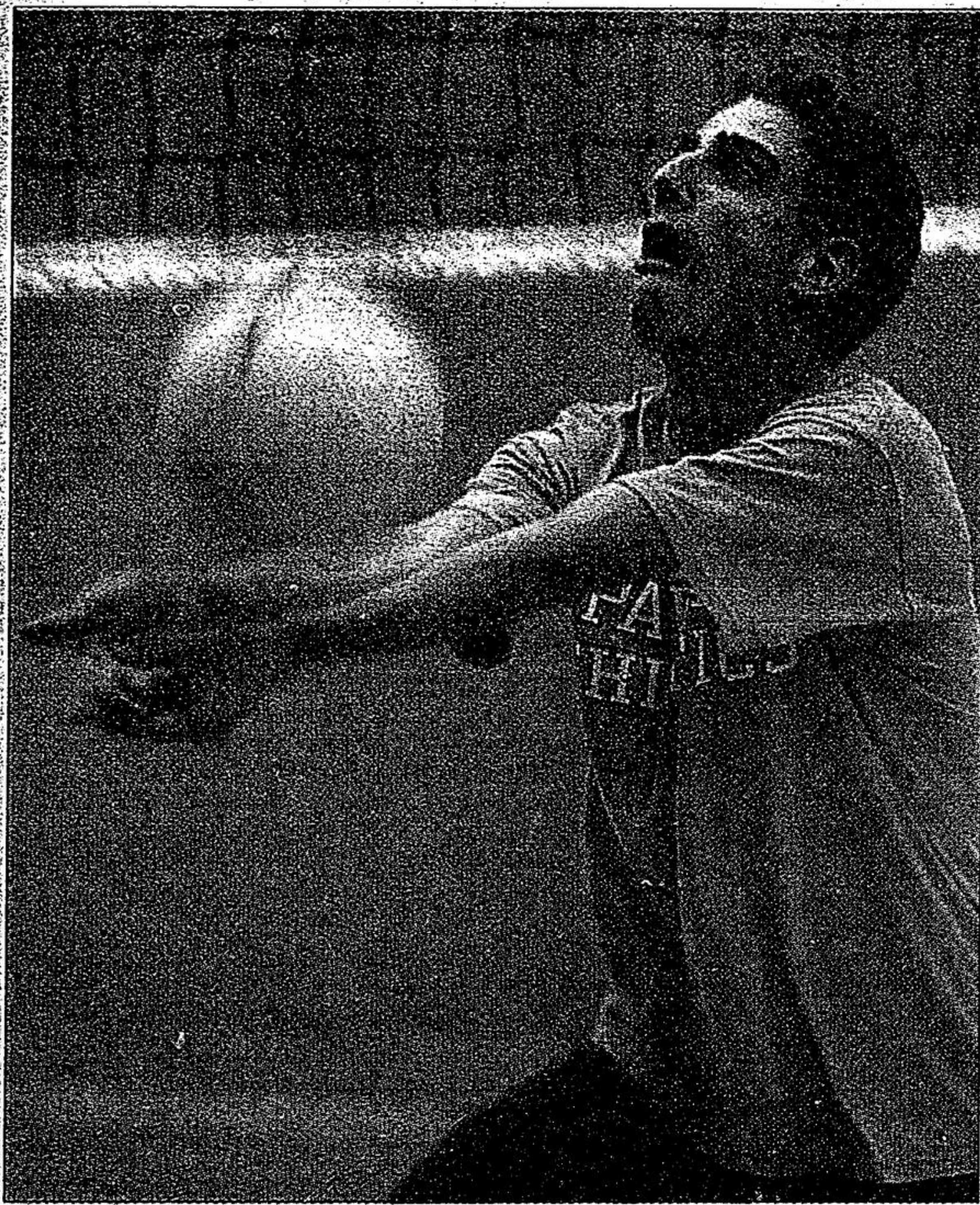
At Scarborough, the Spirit held on to win after leading 5-1 in the third period. Wexford scored three unanswered goals, but an empty-netter doused the comeback.

Rob Groom led the Spirit with a goal and two assists. Sean Gray, Lombardo, Mark Boyce, Carson Devine and Ty Raine had the other goals. Simon Gysbers and Ian Brunst had two assists each. Troy Ciernia had another big game in net for the Spirit, who were outshot 28-22.

At Collingwood, the Spirit erased a 2-1 deficit after one period and led 5-4 after two periods.

Brandon Walker, Boyce, Jake Van Allen, Devine, Lombardo and Gysbers scored for the Spirit. Raine had three assists.

SPIRITED NOTES: The Spirit and Whitchurch-Stouffville Fire and Emergency Service will host fire prevention night during the Oct. 7 game against Thornhill, former Spirit winger Cale Tanaka was traded to Aurora before this season at his request.



STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

Practice makes perfect

Stouffville District Secondary School's Freddy Bell perfects his digging form during a tryout session for the junior boys' volleyball team Tuesday. Sports team representing the school are expected to begin play in the York Region Athletic Association next week.

Pearce saddles fourth-place in \$50,000 Canada Cup final

John Pearce felt he stood a good chance to capture last Sunday's \$50,000 Canada Cup final at the seventh annual Tournament of Champions at Caledon Equestrian Park.

But one mishap while riding his mount Champagne was costly.

Competing in a jump off with Eric Lamaze and Ian Millar, the 40-year-old Stouffville resident lost a stirrup.

Pearce and his 11-year-old German Holsteiner settled for a fourth-place finish after committing eight faults and completing the course in 35.14 seconds.

Lamaze, a 36-year-old Schomberg resident and his mount Pulque, completed the course with no faults and in a time of 31.62 to win the event. Lamaze also rode Tempete and took second, while Ian Miller of Perth and Promise Me, were third.

"It was an unfortunate mishap," Pearce said of the slight error. "I lost my balance for a slight second and in a competition of this magnitude

there's no room for error."

"I thought I had one of the faster horses in the jump off. Champagne has won four major grand prix (events) this year. He's a top horse."

A former member of the 2002 Canadian Olympic equestrian team, Pearce found some consolation in other events, as he rode Archie Bunker, a six-year-old German Oldenburg, to a first-place finish in the jumper development competition. The pair were second in the stoney hill grand prix and sixth in the \$2,500 grand prix level 3 jumper event.

"Archie Bunker is a young up and coming international candidate," Pearce said. "He's just moving up the ranks and he's a big hopeful for the future. He did very well."

Pearce also rode O'Reilly, a five-year-old German Oldenburg, to a first-place finish in the \$500 welcome level one jumper event.

Among other results posted by local riders, Margie Gayford-Sproule and P-Spice were fourth in the jumper

development six-year-old event.

Virginia Gayford and Roxborough were fourth in the adult amateur 36 and over under saddle event and ninth in the adult amateur 36 and over fences.

In the adult amateur 36 and over fences, Martha Gayford and Big Shot placed third.

Danielle Raucamp and Corrado were fifth in the CET gymnastic phase.

In the Class 110 Beginner adult hunter over fences, Erin Brooks and Dominika were second, while Leslie Horn and Earl of Grover were third.

In the Class 112 beginner adult hunter over fences, Horn and Earl of Grover were third and Brooks and Dominika fifth.

Brooks and Dominika were third in the class 113 beginner adult hunter under saddle while Horn and Earl of Grover were fourth.

In the Class 111 beginner adult hunter over fences, Brooks and Dominika were second while Horn and Earl of Grover were fourth.

Minor bantam Clippers tame Toros in tournament final

The Stouffville minor bantam Clippers took home the hardware from the recent Richmond Hill Early Bird Tournament with a 5-3 win over the Clarington Toros in the title tilt.

The Clippers reached the final after going undefeated in round-robin play with wins over the Downsview Beavers 9-1, North York Knights 4-1 and Richmond Hill Stars 9-1.

The Clippers then faced the Windsor Spitfires in a semifinal game

and emerged with a 4-0 win.

Scoring for the Clippers were: Steven DeMelo with 11 goals and seven assists, Lee Averill and Kurtis Hulshof four goals and 1 assist, Nolan Benoit four goals, Dylan Seymour three goals and two assists, Ryan Brown three goals and one assist, Zack Stevens four assists, Chris Tambos one goal and one assist, Josh Montesano and Tom McLeod two assists, Lawson Mann and Anthony Zambri one assist.

Posting a 0.50 goals against average and a shutout was Sean Gibson. Jake Robinson also recorded an impressive 1.66 goals against average.

Novice Clippers split first two games

The Stouffville novice A Clippers began the hockey season on a successful note after blanking the Markham Waxers 3-0 at the Stouffville Arena last Friday.

Greg Barker scored twice for the Clippers while Mitchell Smith added the other marker. Robbie Armstrong and Spencer Roberts each collected

one assist. Cameron Nowkow posted the shutout.

On Sunday, the Clippers suffered its first loss of the season in a 2-1 decision against visiting East Gwillimbury.

Evan Smith scored the lone goal for the Clippers while Matthew Carrick drew an assist.

