

Goalie happy back in Spiritland

JR. A HOCKEY

Steve Filappelli is the poster child for the cause of not burning one's bridges.

The last goalie cut by the Stouffville Spirit this fall, the 17-year-old from Vaughan returned to minor hockey without a whimper. No tantrum, no fuss.

"I was cool with it," he said. "I thought I might have a chance here next year because they went with two older goalies this season."

Filappelli was backstopping the North York Rangers atop the GTHL standings when the Spirit called earlier this month. They were dropping 20-year-old net-minder Troy Ciernia from the roster and wanted Filappelli.

"I was excited; it's a step up for me," he said after earning a win in his first ever junior game, a 6-2 decision over the Huntsville Muskoka Otters

Thursday at the Stouffville Arena.

The win lifted the Spirit (12-8-2-1) into sole possession of third place in the North Conference of the Provincial Jr. A Hockey League, two points ahead of the Otters (12-9-0-1).

Brock Ouellet scored a pair and dished out a huge hit to earn MGH Office Repairs player of the game honours.

The Spirit outshot the Otters 38-18, including 15-3 in the first period.

Mark Boyce and Blake Pullin had a goal and an assist each. Brett Waters and Ty Rainé had single goals.

The Spirit hosts the first-place Newmarket Hurricanes (16-7-0-0) tonight at 7:30 p.m. at

the Stouffville Arena.

Newmarket has three players — Shane Baxter, Kevin Lord and Jeff Moor — from last year's Spirit roster on this year's team.

Waxers at Thornhill tonight

The battle of Markham resumes tonight, when the Markham Waxers meet the Thornhill Thunderbirds at 7:30 p.m. at the Thornhill Community Centre.

The Waxers (16-6-1-0) were tied with Pickering (15-9-1-2) for fourth place in the South Conference entering their game last night with Huntsville.

Thornhill (9-14-0-0) is in seventh place in the nine-team conference.

The Waxers, who play at Vaughan Monday, host Wexford Friday at Markham Centennial Centre.

Under-17 team selects de Gray, Armstrong

Markham's John de Gray and John Armstrong were among 22 players chosen to represent Team Ontario at the Men's Under-17 World Hockey Challenge in Lethbridge, Alta. Dec. 29 to Jan. 4.

SIXTH PICK IN OHL

A six-foot, three-inch defenceman, de Gray was chosen sixth overall in this year's Ontario Hockey League draft by the Brampton Battalion after

playing last season with the Richmond Hill Stars minor midgets.

Armstrong, who plays centre with the Plymouth Whalers, was selected 13th overall from the Toronto Junior Canadiens minor midgets.

Marty Williamson, head coach of the Barrie Colts and former coach of the Markham Waxers and Aurora Tigers, is an assistant coach for the

team.

As one of 10 entries in the competition, Team Ontario is placed in a five-team conference with the United States, Slovakia, Germany and Team West.

The other conference is comprised of Finland, Czech Republic, Pacific, Quebec and Atlantic.

Team Ontario's first game is Dec. 29 against Germany.

Atom Stars off to impressive start

SPORTS DIGEST

The Markham-Stouffville atom BB Stars are on a roll.

Through their first nine North Metro Girls Hockey League tier two east division regular season contests, the Stars remained undefeated.

The Stars' latest triumph took place last Saturday with a 4-1 win over Aurora.

Jessica Gillham notched two goals while singles went to Laura Wyatt and Samantha Keen. Hannah Tunney and Allison Neville each drew assists.

During the weekend of Nov. 6 to 7, the Stars blanked the Clarington Flames 2-0 and Leaside 4-0.

Gillham scored twice for the Stars in the win over the Flames.

In the win over Leaside, Christine Starke had a goal and one assist while single tallies came from Lauren Convery, Gillham and Keen. Megan Rushlow, Hallie Wannop, Brittany King and Neville each earned one assist.

Jessica Barwell and Ainsley Matulaitis have anchored the club's fortunes in goal.

Major peewees enjoy success

The Stouffville major peewee AE Clippers recorded back-to-back wins in minor hockey action, defeating Uxbridge 3-2 and Markham 5-0.

Scott Miller scored twice for the Clippers in the win over Uxbridge while Dylan Shankland added the game-win-

ner. Brett Kirkness assisted on both goals.

In the win over Markham, Miller scored twice while Zac Burke-Fagan had a goal and three helpers and Dalton Mayo and Shankland one goal each.

Kyle Pontone posted the shutout.

Gym dandy effort

A pair of performers representing the new TriStar Gymnastics club of Markham had successful outings at a Tour Selection Meet in Mississauga.

Competing after a two-year absence from the sport, Alex Giroux, 13, finished in a tie for seventh all-around in the Level 4 group.

In individual events, Giroux was fourth on floor, ninth bars and 10th beam.

Giroux gained a berth on an Ontario team that will compete at the Kurt Thomas Invitational in Texas next February.

Brooke Devine, a 14-year-old Level 3 performer, placed seventh all-around in the 12 to 14 category.

She was fourth on floor and placed in the top seven on bars and beam.

Giroux and Devine's coaches are July Gerschovich and Jennia Muratalyeva.

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