

Stouffville Sun-Tribune

SPORTS

Sweet revenge for Spartans on volleyball court in YRAA final

SDSS rallies to defeat Huron Heights in regional title tilt

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA
Staff Writer

For a while during Friday's York Region Athletic Association senior boys' volleyball championship final, it looked as if it would be a short night for the Stouffville District Secondary School Spartans.

The Spartans trailed 2-0 (26-24, 25-14) and were on the verge of elimination in the best-of-five match against the Huron Heights Secondary School Warriors, last year's YRAA champions.

The Spartans however, managed to turn the night into a marathon on the Sacred Heart Catholic High School hardwood.

At the same time, it turned out to be a memorable one for the Spartans as they rallied to win the next three games, capped off by a 15-9 verdict in the decisive set to claim this year's title.

As well, they atoned for a loss to the Warriors in last year's YRAA final.

TURN THINGS AROUND

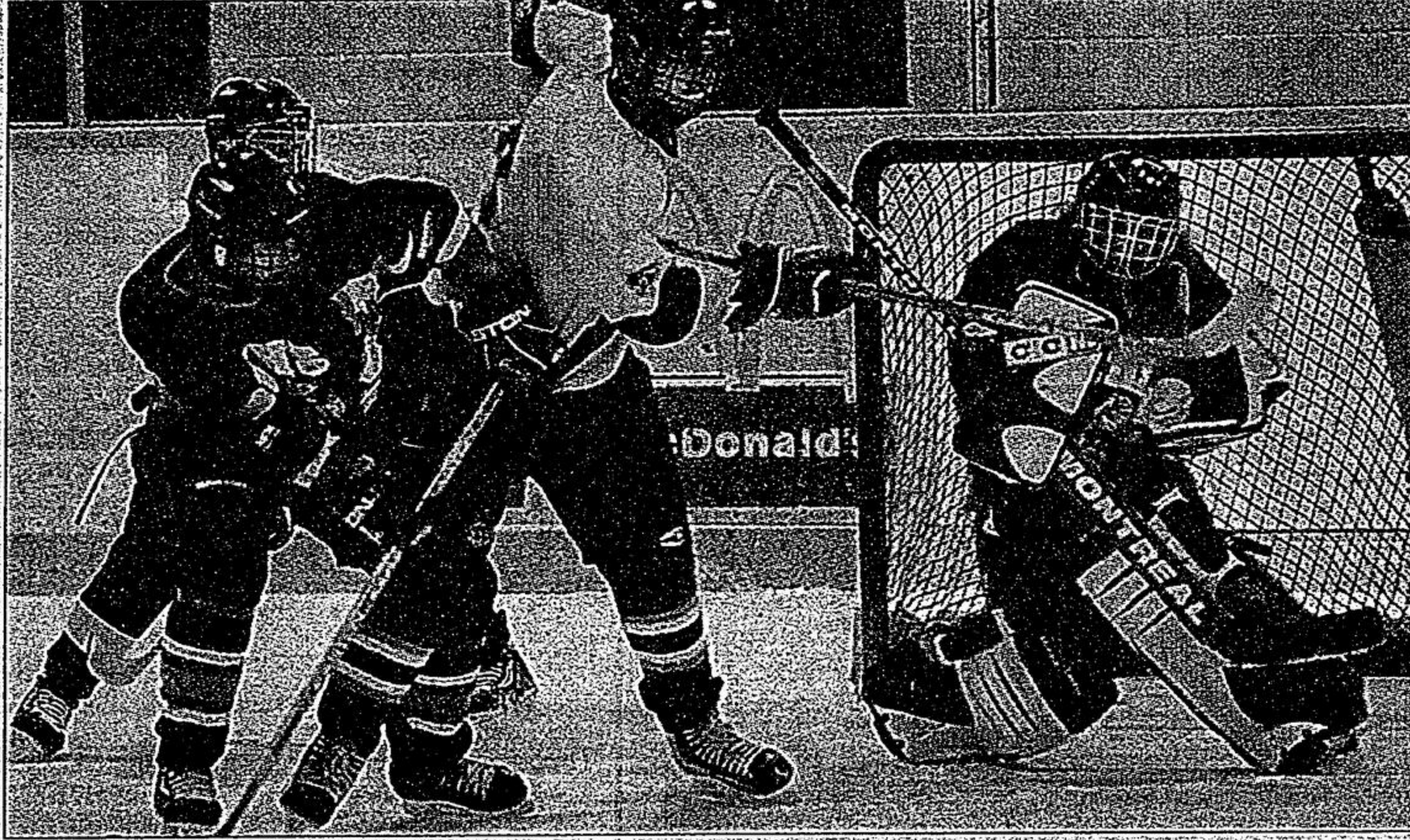
Although his club was on the verge of being eliminated in quick fashion, veteran Spartans head coach Jim Fletcher remained optimistic his charges would turn things around.

"We had come back in the first game to make it close and during that game a player on Huron Heights got hurt, he twisted his ankle and there was a 15-minute delay and we let down and Huron Heights went crazy," Fletcher recalled. "In the second game it (the Warriors' momentum) carried over and we couldn't do anything right. But I told the kids that we were playing well and it will happen. They (Huron Heights) had their fling and we said 'let's do it now.'"

The Spartans did just as Fletcher ordered as they won the next two games 25-19 and 25-20 to set the stage for the finale.

Teaching this year at Thornlea Secondary School in Thornhill, but asked by the Spartans players to come back to coach them one more year, Fletcher credited his club's dramatic comeback to several factors.

With all of his starters back from last year's YRAA silver medal winning club, Fletcher



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Stouffville District Secondary School Spartans' forward Scott Marks (white uniform) tries to tip the puck past a beleaguered Keswick High School Cougars' goalkeeper David Wood in last Thursday's YRAA regular season senior boys' hockey opening game at Stouffville Arena. The Spartans prevailed 7-2.

said they possessed plenty of experience and character.

"I had plenty of confidence in our guys. They were in great condition and they knew what they had to do," he said.

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Fletcher also pointed out that with his club playing close to 150 sets this year, including tournament and league matches, the lessons learned from those outings paid off.

"Having all of those games hardened us and we practised Wednesday nights late from 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. and I think that was to our advantage since the final went long. We had good game experience."

DIVERSIFIED ATTACK AN ASSET

From a technical viewpoint, Fletcher thought his club's ability to create a diversified attack was critical.

"We can hit from any place on the floor. We can use combos, back quicks and tandems and our setter is good enough to use the whole net," he said.

Fletcher was quick to praise the play of a number of players including setter and team captain Alan McGrath, middle players Justin Reesor and Jon

Chaput, power hitters Gavin Howe and his brother, Justin, Dan Locksley and Curtis Reesor.

Assisting Fletcher this year on the bench is Dave Healey.

Next up for the Spartans is a trip this weekend to the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations AA playdowns in Clinton.

The Spartans are seeded second in a pool that includes Francis Libermann High School (Scarborough), Lester B. Pearson Secondary School (Burlington), Hamilton District Catholic High School and Kincardine District Secondary School.

Making his 14th trip to an OFSAA volleyball playdown, Fletcher feels confident his experienced charges can vie for a medal.

"If they play the way they're capable of they can win OFSAA. I'd be disappointed though if we didn't come home with a medal," he said.

Hockey Spartans win first two league games

The Spartans senior boys' hockey team, last year's YRAA champions, opened its regular season with two victories.

Playing in Newmarket Monday, the Spartans received a two-goal effort from Kyle Miller to edge the Huron Heights Secondary School Warriors 2-1.

In last Thursday's season opener at the Stouffville Arena, the Spartans routed Keswick

High School 7-2.

Alex Bruno scored twice while Miller, Brandon Jupp, Scott Moody, Jon Wunch and Zach Popper each added singles.

The Spartans' next league game is Dec. 1 when they host Cardinal Carter Catholic High School, last year's YRAA finalist, at 3 p.m. at Stouffville Arena.

Senior girls caged at YRAA playoffs

The Spartans senior girls basketball team was eliminated in the first round of Friday's YRAA playoffs at St. Augustine Catholic High School in Markham, coming out on the short end of a 49-31 decision to the host Titans.

Pearl Coleshill was high scorer for the Spartans with 15 points.

The Titans proceeded to win the title with a 47-38 win over Brother Andre Catholic High School (Markham).

OFSAA QUALIFIER

The Spartans, however, had at least one more game to play as they were slated to be in Oshawa yesterday to face G.L. Roberts Collegiate (Oshawa) in an Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations AA qualifier.

The winner will earn a berth in next weekend's OFSAA AA tourney in Belleville.

For more information on high school sports in York Region, log on to: www.yraa.com

Juniors hopes to tame Terriers

Spirit defeats Newmarket 7-3, then loses to North York 5-3

The Stouffville Spirit meets a team in transition tonight in the Couchiching Terriers.

The Orillia-area squad (6-16-0-2) is tied for last place in the North Conference of the Provincial Jr. A Hockey League. See standings on page 23.

The Terriers fired head coach Ray Flaherty earlier this month and replaced him with former NHL draft pick Bill Maguire.

And last week 20-year-old goalie Mike Thompson, arguably the team's MVP, asked for a trade. The Terriers purchased another goalie, Marc Stuart, from the Wexford Raiders to fill the anticipated void.

Game time is 7:30 at the Stouffville Arena.

The third-place Spirit (13-9-2-1), meanwhile, won two of three games last week, highlighted by a 7-3 win over the first-place Newmarket Hurricanes in front of 500 people Saturday in Stouffville. Twenty hours later they lost 5-3 to the North York Rangers in Toronto.

Against Newmarket, Ty Raine had two goals and two assists, including a highlight reel setup of Patrick Lee's goal. Brock Ouellet also scored twice.

Rob Groom and Sean Gray had the other goals.

At North York, the Spirit trailed the Rangers 3-0 after one period before losing 5-3. An empty-net goal late sealed the win for the Rangers, who are tied for first place in the South Conference.

The Spirit outshot the Rangers 29-24.

Groom, Jake Van Allen and Ouellet scored for the Spirit.

The Spirit plays at Aurora tomorrow night.

SPIRITED NOTES: Goaltender Troy Ciernia was sold to the Central Texas Marshals of the North American Hockey League last week. The goalie he replaced, Jeff Fischer, was obtained by the Markham Waxers.



TY RAINE: Third-year Spirit forward scored twice and set up two goals in 7-3 win over Newmarket Hurricanes in Stouffville.