

Stouffville Sun-Tribune

## SPORTS



PHOTO/TOM BARNETT

Stouffville minor atom AE Clippers' Keaton Major (left), tries to impede the progress of Markham Waxers' Nicholas Papuckas as they pursue a loose puck during Friday's first-round tournament contest hosted by the Whitchurch-Stouffville Minor Hockey Association at the Stouffville Arena. The Clippers won this game 4-0, but lost 4-0 in the final to Caledon.

## Minor atom AE Clippers downed in tournament final

The Stouffville minor atom AE Clippers advanced to the final of last weekend's Whitchurch-Stouffville Minor Hockey Association tournament before falling 4-0 to Caledon in the final.

The Clippers had a good start when Alex McKean scored a hat trick and Hayden Ellison added a goal en route to a 4-0 win over the Markham Waxers.

Ryan Maloney, Nick Robb, Maresa Benacquista and Michael Lennie earned assists. Facing Caledon in its sec-

ond game, the Clippers came out on the short end of a 4-3 verdict.

Maloney, Lennie and Brendan Clifford did the scoring. Ellison, Robb and Benacquista drew assists.

The Clippers then faced Markham and emerged with a 5-0 win.

McKean, Maloney, Lennie, Matthew Rundle and John Anthony Coscarella handled the offence. Jon-Ross Newlands collected two assists while McKean, Ellison, Benacquista and Clifford had

assists.

The Clippers advanced to the semi-finals against Clarington and were forced into a five-minute three-on-three overtime session before Carson Nelson scored to give Stouffville a 3-2 win.

Lennie and Clifford scored the other Clipper goals. McKean collected two assists while Ellison and Robb each had one.

Connor Rowntree and Mathew Espey shared goal-tending duties.

## Juvenile Clippers in control

The Stouffville juvenile Clippers took command of their Ontario Minor Hockey Association semi-final series against the Peterborough Nationals after winning the opening two games of the best-of-five or six-point affair.

Stouffville opened the series March 4 with a 3-1 win at the Stouffville Arena.

Nick Ristich, Andy Gibson and James Guinane, into an empty net, handled the offence. Stephen Relf collected two assists and Josh Spang one. Jake Balsdon was the winning goalie.

With the series resuming in Peterborough Sunday, Trevor Greenham scored twice to lift the Clippers to a 5-2 win.

Dana MacDonald added a goal and assist while Mike Manson and Spang added single tallies. Jon Wonch, Gabe Barnett, Andy Gibson and Guinane each had an assist. Shawn Gibson played a solid game in goal.

The Clippers can wrap up the series Friday when they host Peterborough at 9 p.m.

## Spartan girls advance to York championship

The Stouffville District Secondary School Spartans girls' hockey team advanced to the York high school final after sweeping the best-of-three semi-final series against Westmount Secondary School (Thornhill).

The final victory last Thursday was by a 2-1 margin at the Stouffville Arena.

Laurie McLellan and Kendall Knox each scored once for the Spartans.

Stouffville won the first game 2-0 last Wednesday.

The Spartans face Aurora High School in a first team to three points series starting 3 p.m. today at Stouffville Arena.

The series continues Friday at the Aurora Leisure Complex at 2:15 p.m.

## Hurricanes put an end to Spirit season

*Fights, taunts mar end of deciding match*

Players and personnel with the Stouffville Spirit gather tonight for their team photo at the Stouffville Arena.

They'd rather be playing Game 7 of their Provincial Jr. A Hockey League North Conference semifinal in Newmarket.

That won't happen, after the Newmarket Hurricanes eliminated the Spirit in six games, capped off by a 4-2 win Tuesday at the Stouffville Arena.

"That series was the story of our year," said Spirit general manager Ken Burrows. "We had lots of chances tonight, but couldn't score. We make three mistakes and they score on all three."

The Spirit scored first, 35 seconds into the game. Ian Brunt got it, with Brandon Tilley, who the Spirit accused of taking cheap shots throughout the series, in the box.

Newmarket would score the next two goals, before Ty Raine tied it, also on the power play, with less than eight minutes left in regulation time.

But Newmarket netted the winner on a sweet passing play three minutes later, then added an empty-netter from Tilley with less than a minute to go.

He cursed to the crowd of 500 while teammate Matt Whitehead taunted the Spirit bench, swinging his hockey stick like a golf club.

The game was all but over, but not the antics. Spirit tough guy Cory Battista gave a hard elbow to Newmarket's Dan Falbo in the last minute, netting him a five-minute major and wrath of Newmarket players and fans, who attempted to get at him.

Newmarket defenceman Logan Noble fired a slap shot in the direction of the Stouffville bench, and then pointed at the coaching staff. He missed the mark. There was no penalty on the play.

Skirmishes erupted in the dressing rooms corridor and the lobby but ended quickly with York Regional Police in attendance.

Newmarket now meets the Aurora Tigers, who knocked out the Huntsville Muskoka Otters in game 6 Tuesday in Huntsville.

"Experience burnt us in the series," said Burrows, of his much younger roster.

"Newmarket can also give Couchiching an assist on that series. We had a very rough six-game series with them in the first round, while Newmarket had a no-hitter (four-game sweep) with Streetsville."

Spirit athletic therapist Drew Laskoski is "happy to have a week-end off from treating players."

Scoring leader Ty Raine played hurt since being injured in an off-ice assault Friday night. Conference



**KEN BURROWS:** Spirit general manager said experience was the difference in the series, which Newmarket won in six games.

defenceman of the year Simon Gysbers played Tuesday with a thumb broken by a slash in Game 4.

Other injuries included Brock Ouellet (torn ACL), Jack Van Allen (bone fragments in shoulder joint), Scott Brown (bruised back, torn rotator), Blake Pullin (flu), Chris Harris (cracked thumb), Will Acton (separated shoulder), Michael Lombardo (sprained ankle) and Dan McWhinney (hamstring pull).

### Players gain experience

Sean Gray left a junior hockey dressing room for the final time late Tuesday.

The lone 20-year-old graduate on the Stouffville Spirit roster grabbed his gear, shared a story or two with teammates then shook the hands of team officials, thanking them for his year in Stouffville.

The Pickering resident, called up to the Spirit a year ago in the playoffs from its Jr. C affiliate in Uxbridge, was a warrior on defence this season.

"He has one of the biggest hearts of any kid I've ever coached," Spirit assistant coach Jeff Perrin said.

"What he lacks in talent, he makes up in courage and determination. Just a great kid."

The only 19-year-old on the team, Dan McWhinney, also impressed the staff.

"He is a true No. 1 goalie in this league," said Burrows of the Sault Ste. Marie native.

"He proved it to us," Perrin said. "He's a pressure situation goalie who played very well when we won the Vaughan tournament and in the playoffs."

In contrast, Newmarket, which eliminated the Spirit in the conference semifinal for the second straight season, has eight 20-year-olds and five 19-year-olds on its roster.

"A lot of our kids will be back next season," said Burrows.

"And going through two tough playoff rounds this year will pay dividends down the road."

For more on the Spirit, log on to [www.stouffville-spirit.com](http://www.stouffville-spirit.com)