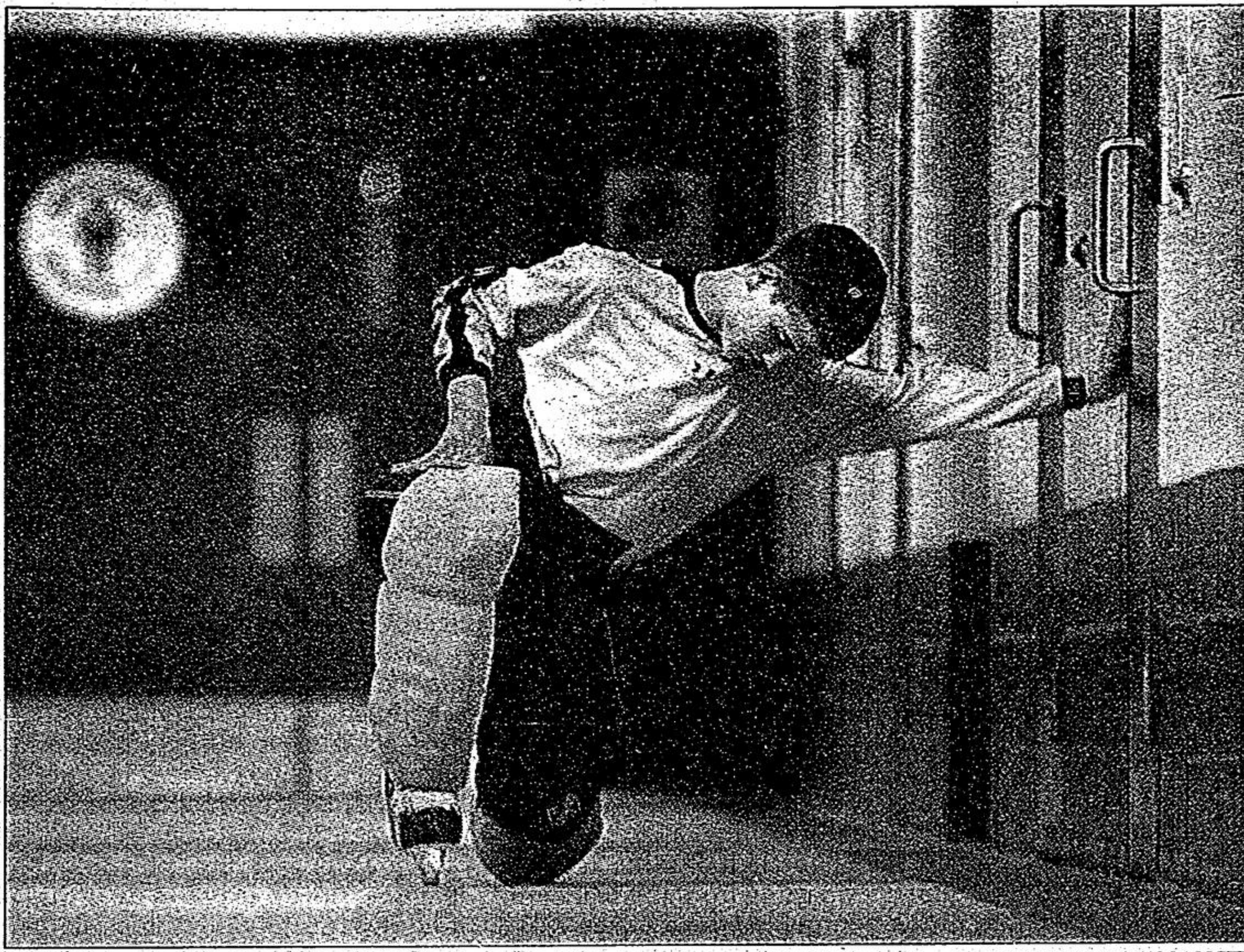


Stouffville Sun-Tribune

SPORTS



STAFF PHOTO/MIKE BARRETT

Stretching it to the limit

Pickering native Jason Dale, 16, stretches in the Stouffville Arena corridor prior to taking to the ice last weekend with the hopes of making the Stouffville Spirit junior A hockey club. The Provincial Junior A Hockey League team hosted more than 100 players from across Ontario at its annual spring tryout camp. The team's main camp begins in mid-August.

Spartan boys' baseball team hope lightning strikes twice

SDSS team earns split in first two York outings

The Stouffville District Secondary School Spartans varsity boys' baseball team hopes to avoid the sophomore jinx.

Making their debut on the ball diamond last season, the Spartans recorded a nifty 5-1 regular season record in the York Region Athletic Association tier two league before bowing out in the first round of the playoffs.

While two games do not constitute an entire season, the Spartans are off to another positive start this season having won their opener last week in resounding fashion over the Richmond Hill High School Raiders 10-0 before dropping a 13-8 decision to Markville Secondary School Monday.

With just two players returning from last season's squad in catcher Jon Wonch and pitcher Mark Lofthouse, who was credited with the win in last week's opener, it might appear the Spartans could face a huge challenge this season in replicating or even improving on last season's accomplishments.

But don't tell that to Spartans' head coach Andy Stoikos.

When the school announced tryouts for this year's squad, Stoikos said enthusiasm at the school was noticeably higher than last season.

"We had over 30 kids come out and we had to make some difficult decisions to make in finalizing our team. There was a lot of talent to choose from," he said in finalizing this year's 15-member unit.

Among new faces that have impressed Stoikos and assistant coach Jeff Fong, include second baseman Landon Wideman, short stop Will Acton, a member of the Stouffville Spirit junior A hockey club and son of Toronto Maple Leafs' assistant coach Keith Acton, and pitcher Chris Raymer.

"We had a successful year last year. But we'll see what happens. The kids are looking forward to the season," a cautiously optimistic Stoikos said.

Midget tracksters shine at invitational meets

Buoyed by a strong performance from its midget boys' and girls' contingent, the Spartans' track and field team finished

13th out of 110 teams and third overall in the midget division at last weekend's Cardinal Carter Classic in Etobicoke.

Natalie Geiger anchored the midget girls' team after breaking three school records in winning the 100-metre, 200m and 400m events. A Grade 9 student, Geiger won the 100m in 12.59 seconds, the 200m in 25.76 and 400m in 58.08.

In the midget boys' field, James Beare set a school record in the high jump and finished second with a leap of 1.70m.

Dan Coskun threw two personal bests to place third in the shot put and discus.

In the javelin, Brodie Atkinson finished third.

Sixth-place efforts came from Kyle Cussion in the javelin and Malcolm Forbes, 3000m.

In the senior boys' group, Dale Passfield set a school record in the javelin with a toss of 42.86m to finish seventh.

Andrea Carins was eighth in the senior girls' javelin.

Spartans track coach Steve Jimmo was quite pleased with the effort of his team. In particular, he praised the school record-setting efforts of Geiger, Beare and Passfield.

The effort put fourth by the

See GEIGER, page 34.

Plymouth serves Stouffville resident his OHL draft notice

Beal's physical presence enticed Whalers to pick him in the third round

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA
Staff Writer

When Chad Beal played with the York Simcoe Express peewees two years ago, his coach gave him some advice he took to heart.

The 16-year-old Stouffville resident recalled Anthony Circelli telling him he had some tools that could take him a long ways in the game.

Beal remembered.

During Saturday's 2005 Ontario Hockey League priority selection, the Plymouth Whalers chose the six-foot, one-inch, 215-pound centre in the third round, 49th overall.

"It's definitely a big step in my hockey career," said Beal, a Grade 10 student at Stouffville District Secondary School, during a break from class Tuesday.

Playing this past season with the Wexford Raiders minor midgets in Toronto, he compiled 23 goals and 35 assists for 58 points and 172 penalty minutes in 49 games. He confessed he was surprised to be selected by the Whalers.

'He (Beal) gives us some size and makes it easier to go into some tough buildings like Windsor and Saulte Ste. Marie.'

In days leading up to the draft, Beal had extensive talks with the Oshawa Generals and Kitchener Rangers.

The Whalers called his home, too, but Beal wasn't in.

"I thought that I would go somewhere closer like Oshawa or Kitchener," he said.

As for being chosen in the third round, Beal said that didn't come as much of a surprise since his coach with the Raiders, Pat Curcio, told him he would go in the first or second round.

"I saw both rounds go by on the Internet and when I wasn't picked then I thought that I would go in the third round," said Beal, who also played for the Stouffville District Secondary School Spartans junior boys' squad this year.

Beal hopes to make the Whalers and bring his physical game to the suburban Detroit team.

"In my first year I don't think I'll play much. Maybe on the fourth

line. But I hope to make some big hits and score a few goals," he said.

Whalers head coach Mike Vellucci feels Beal's selection will fill a big void for his club, which was the need for a physical player.

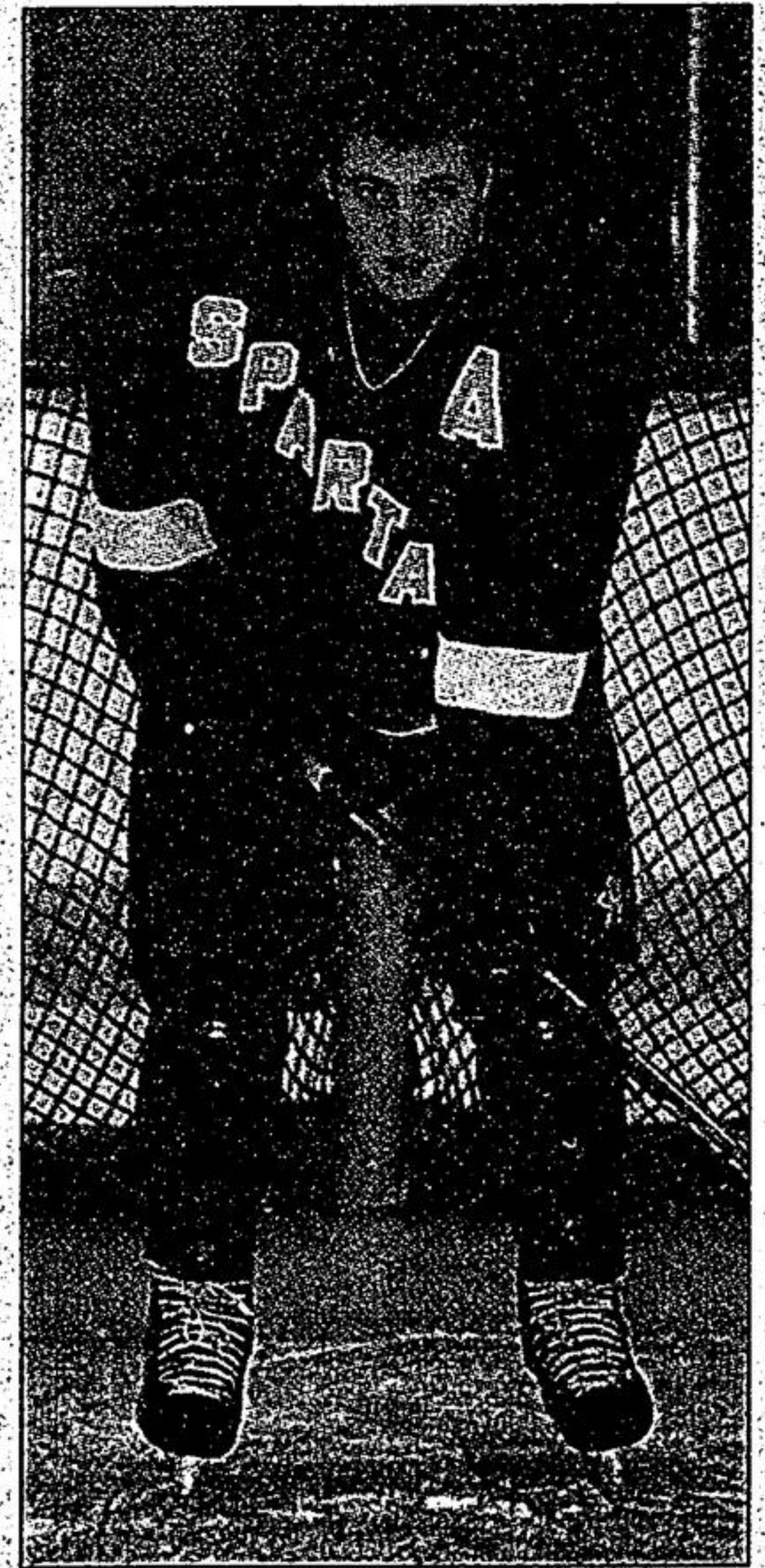
"Beal's a big centerman," said Vellucci on the Whalers' website. "He gives us some size and makes it easier to go into tough buildings like Windsor and Sault Ste. Marie."

A native of Aurora, Beal began his minor hockey career when he was four years old and worked his way up the ranks starting at the AA rep level in Aurora before moving to the York Simcoe Express for three years starting at the minor peewee level. He joined the Raiders this past season.

Should Beal not make the Whalers, he will play for the Stouffville Spirit of the Provincial Junior A Hockey League.

If he makes the Whalers, he'll play with fellow Stouffville resident Cory Tanaka, who just completed his first year in the OHL.

For more on the OHL draft, log on to: <http://ohldraft.ilap.com/ps2005>



Stouffville resident Chad Beal, 16, played minor hockey this past season with the Wexford Raiders minor midgets and for the Stouffville District Secondary School Spartans junior boys' team.