

# SPORTS

## Gysbers continues to receive hockey accolades

*Spirit defenceman in prospects game, on NHL draft list*

2005 has been excellent for Simon Gysbers.

The third-year defenceman on the Stouffville Spirit was one of five players in the Provincial Jr. A Hockey League named to the NHL draft list last week.

This week, the 18-year-old from Oak Ridges was one of 40 players announced to play in the inaugural Canadian Jr. A Hockey League Prospects Game, Dec. 7 in Yorkton, Sask.

Earlier this year, Gysbers, the defenceman of the year in North Conference last season, accepted a scholarship to attend Lake Superior State University in Sault Ste. Marie, Mich.

Quite the year.

"It takes a while for it all to sink in," said Gysbers, after learning of the trip west and his NHL listing. "But it's all really exciting."

Teammates, who call the six-foot, four-inch Gysbers "Gyzy", lined up to shake his



**SIMON GYSBERS:** Is excited to showcase his skills in junior A all-star game Dec. 7 in Yorkton, Sask.

hand and ask for an autograph at practice Tuesday.

"And the thing is, Simon probably hasn't played his best hockey yet this season," Spirit head coach Dan West said.

"(The scouts) can see his potential to develop at a very quick rate and he is being rewarded for that."

The Spirit improved to 12-4-3-3 with a 4-3 win over the Oshawa Legionaires Saturday. Captain Ian Brunt's point-

shot goal with 19 seconds left in regulation was the game-winner.

The Spirit, which trailed 3-2 after two periods, outshot Oshawa 47-26.

Goaltenders Matt Wagener of Oshawa and the Spirit's Dan McWhinney were outstanding.

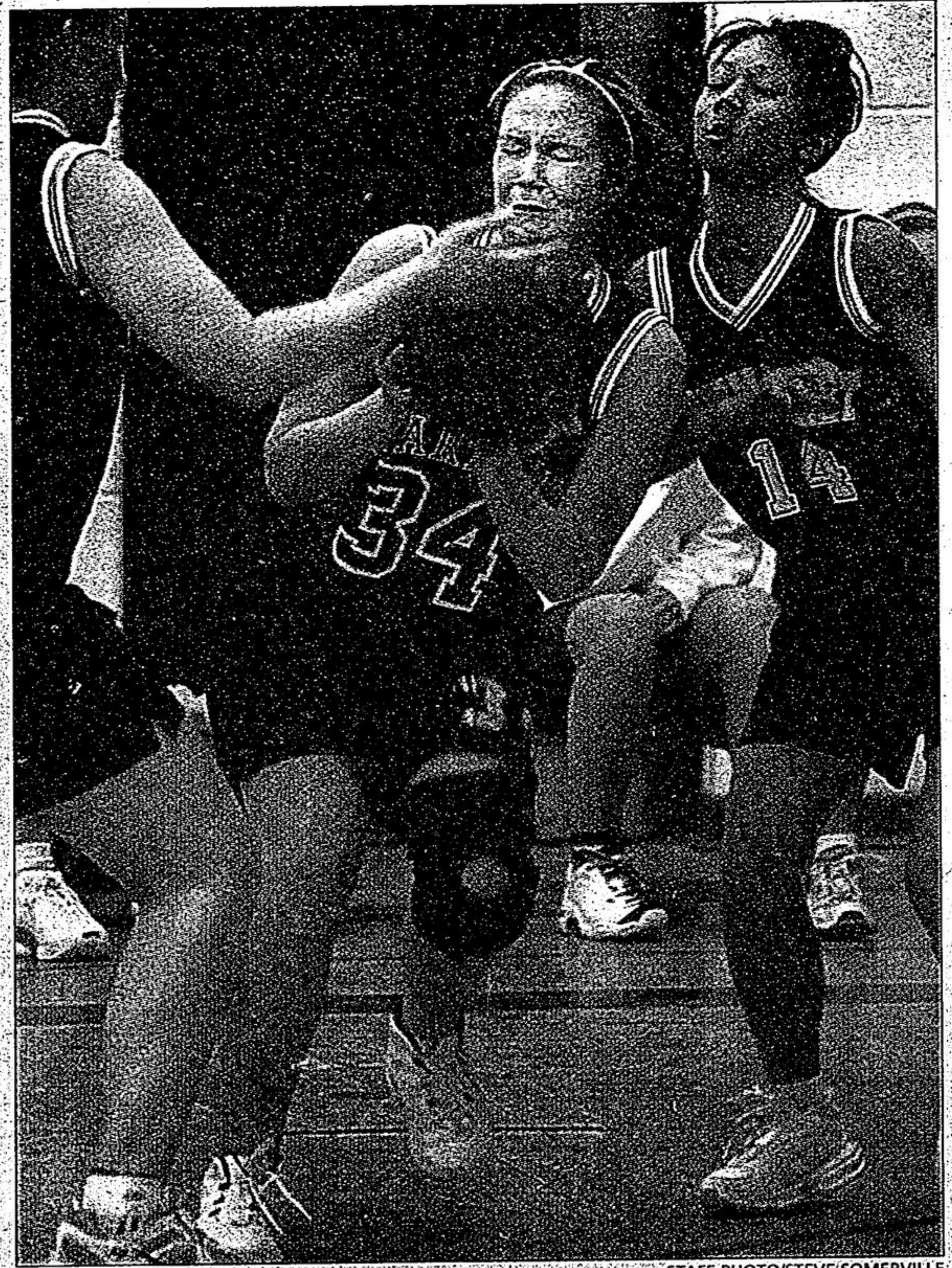
Scott Brown, Randy Johnston and Shawn Frank had the other Spirit goals.

Joel Sheppard had three assists.

The Spirit hosts the Vaughan Vipers tonight at 7:30 and visits Aurora Friday and Ajax Sunday.

**SPIRITED NOTES:** No word on when the third period or all of last Thursday's game with Seguin will be played. The Spirit led 3-1 in the second intermission when the ice-making machine broke down at the Stouffville Arena...forward Tom Coukos has been dealt to Ajax...Stouffville resident Cale Tanaka, who plays for Aurora, has accepted a scholarship to Huntsville-Alabama.

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



STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

## Hang on tight

Stouffville District Secondary School's Lara Moller (centre) grimaces in an attempt to maintain possession of the ball while being surrounded by Newmarket High School's Kaitlyn Porter (left) and Lisa Len in Tuesday's York Region senior girls' OFSAA AA qualifier at Stouffville. The host Spartans prevailed 45-24 and will host the Lake Ontario Secondary School Athletic Association AA representative today at 4 p.m. for the right to play at the provincial championships. Pearl Coleshill and Sam Sheridan led the Spartans' offence with 11 points each.

## Birker takes to the trails to race off with national dirt biking championship

BY JIM THOMAS  
Correspondent

Christian Birker is proud to display the award.

In his possession, the 13-year-old Stouffville resident has a huge trophy, emblematic of a first-place effort he achieved in the 11-15 year-old boys' division at the National Hare Dirt-Bike Scramble in Vienna, Ont.

The event was sponsored by the Canadian Motorcycle Association.

The eight-kilometre course took him through hazards of woods, mud and

water.

He commandeered an 85-horsepower Kawasaki, capable of reaching speeds of 80 km/h.

Birker described the Vienna meet as the biggest thrill of his life, his fifth first-place finish in eight tries this year.

In overall points, he came in second, losing out to a rider from Vienna.

Birker comes by this form of recreation honestly. His father Chris is also a dirt-bike enthusiast.

Competitions have taken him as far as St. Thomas,

Hillsdale and Barrie. The season finale was held at Wheatley, Ont., near Windsor.

To date, despite jumps of 40 to 50 feet, Birker has escaped serious injury.

"I'm well padded," he said with assurance.

His mother Debbie admits she's only attended a few of her son's meets.

"I can't look," she claims.

Next year, Birker hopes to move up to novice B-class competition, with eventual aspirations of acquiring a sponsorship and turning professional.

## Hockey girls off to a good start

The Stouffville District Secondary School Spartans varsity girls' hockey team overcame a three-goal deficit by erupting with three goals of their own in the final period to salvage a 3-3 tie against Sacred Heart Catholic High School of Newmarket in York Region Athletic Association action Tuesday.

Jessica Ziegler, Hayley Hughes and Heather Hughes scored for the Spartans.

The tie was preceded by a 4-3 opening game road win last Thursday over the Brother Andre Catholic High School Cardinals in Markham.

Heather Hughes scored twice for the Spartans while Ashley McLellan and Ziegler added singles.

The Spartans will take to the road Monday to face Huron Heights Secondary School at Hollingsworth Arena in Newmarket at 3 p.m.

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