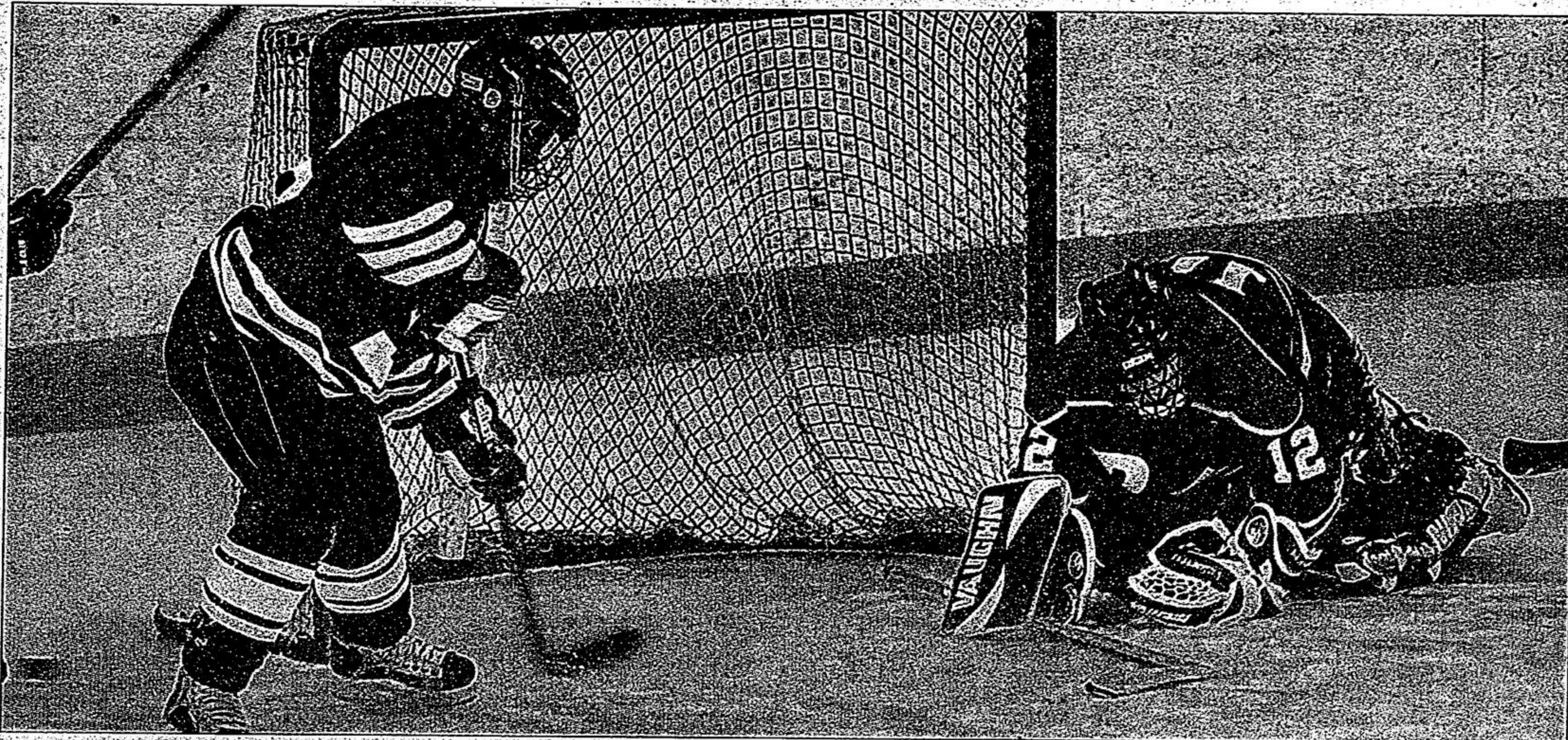


SPORTS



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY MISSED

Stouffville District Secondary School Spartan Lauren Barber misses the open net as the puck flies by and Brother Andre High School Cardinal Kate Irvin is out of position during York Region high school hockey game at Stouffville Arena Tuesday. The Spartans won 7-3.

Teacher one happy curler

One-time hockey prospect off to Ontario finals in Mississauga next week

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA
Staff Writer

Katrina Collins recalled growing up and wanting to play hockey.

While that request was turned down by her father Jim, the Stouffville resident found another sport to play.

The decision to take up curling proved to be a good one. She has since won several honours since taking it up 16 years ago.

In 1995, Collins was part of a Unionville Curling Club foursome skipped by Christy Anderson that represented the Toronto Curling Association in exhibition matches in Switzerland.

Two years later, she was a vice on a Unionville Curling Club team skipped by Sara Harvey that finished fourth at the Canadian junior women's championships.

Just recently, the 28-year-old Stouffville District Secondary School teacher rejoined Harvey as a lead for a Unionville Curling Club team that won the east regional A side bracket of Scott Tournament of Hearts ladies' provincial qualifier at the Gananoque Curling Club near Kingston.

They earned a berth in the provincial championships Jan. 22-28 at the Dixie Curling Club. Other team members include Collins' younger sister Tammy Sale, 22, who plays second, and vice

Stacey Smith, 28.

For Collins, her appearance in the provincials marks the first time she has done so at the ladies' level. A victory there, would propel their first-year entry to the nationals.

"It's pretty exciting, but nervous," she said.

Reflecting on their success at the east regional qualifier, Collins felt everything just came together for their foursome, which was hatched at the end of last year's season.

"We knew most of the teams that were there because we had played them during the year and we knew we weren't the favorites entering the event," Collins said. "But we have four great players. Everybody just pulled together at the right time."

Collins enjoys the responsibility that goes with playing lead.

"I like to sweep and throw and not having the pressure at the end," she said with a laugh. "I like setting up the end."

Competition and people she's met through the years kept her in curling.

"You have a group of people who you see four months of the year and you see them all the time. It's kind of a social thing," she said. "But at the same time, it's the competition where you have an opportunity to represent Ontario at the national level in a sport where anybody has a chance to get to a high competitive level as compared to something like hockey where, if you're not selected, that's it. That's what I like about curling."

For more on the championships, go to ontcurl.com

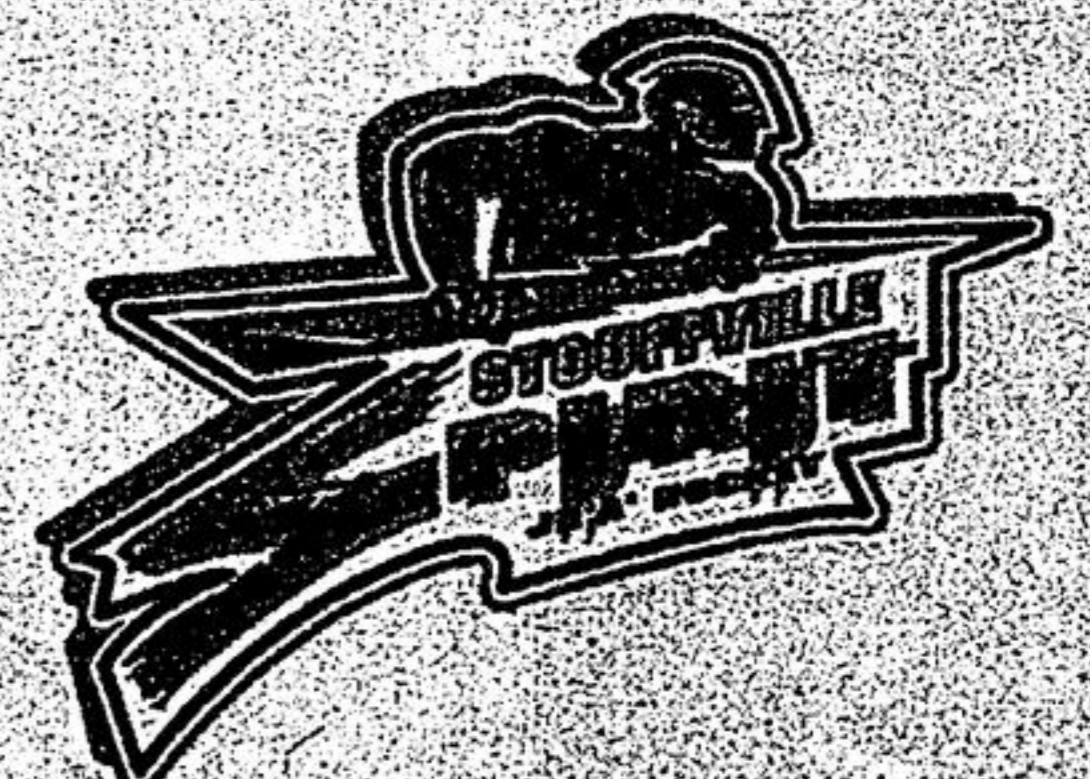
Spirit winning streak on line in tough three-game set

LAST WEEK: Friday - won 6-0 against Orangeville Crushers. Now 23-14-2-2 on season, second place in North Conference.

COMING UP: Thursday vs. Aurora Tigers at Stouffville Arena, 7:30 p.m.; Friday at Collingwood Blues, 8 p.m.; Saturday vs. Newmarket Hurricanes at Stouffville Arena, 7:30 p.m.

GAME NOTES: Make it five straight wins and counting for the Stouffville Spirit. Taking to the road last Friday in Orangeville for a game against the Crushers, the Spirit remained undefeated since the Christmas break after emerging with a 6-0 victory. Corey Trivino proved again why he is one of the best 16-year-old hockey players in Ontario. The member of the province's under-17 team collected two goals and three assists to lead the Spirit offence. The Spirit broke open a 1-0 lead early in the third period with three goals in 1:30 to beat the short-staffed Crushers. Captain Randy Johnston had a goal and four assists. Mark Kubicz pitched the shutout in the Spirit net and was especially sharp in the second period. Ex-Crusher defenceman Tom Kokelj scored twice on blasts from the point. James McIntosh had the other Spirit goal. The Spirit (23-14-2-2) remains in second place in the North Conference, three points up on Collingwood. The Spirit, which remains undefeated since the Christmas holiday break, hosts first-place Aurora Thursday.

NOTEBOOK: Injured forward Josh Domingues is expected to make his debut with the club by Jan. 25 at the latest, Spirit head coach Dan West reported. Incurring a knee injury during the off-season that required surgery, Domingues is



ahead of his rehabilitation schedule and has been chomping at the bit to get back on the active roster in recent days. Friday's contest against the Crushers marked the first time they faced former assistant coach Tom Milne, who took on the head job in Orangeville in late December.

GENERALLY SPEAKING: "Everybody's playing well. Our fourth line is working hard and everybody is feeding off of it. Everything is clicking," West said of his club's recent success.

Looking ahead to the club's next three games, West said it will be a test.

"Aurora's lost two in a row and we've won five. I'm sure Aurora will be motivated to get back in the win column. These next three games (against Aurora, Collingwood and Newmarket) will be our toughest weekend of the season."

INSIDER: For live scoring go to pointstreak.com. Listen live at whistleradio.com.

For more on the Spirit, go to: stouffvillespirit.com



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- Johanne 905-294-2200 x 255



FEATURED GUEST SPEAKERS

Friday, February 23 at 1:30pm —
Marjorie Mason, Mason-Hogue Gardens, Uxbridge.



Saturday, February 24 at 1:30 & 3:30pm —
Mark Cullen, Canada's gardening expert!

