

SPORTS

WHERE DID SHE COME FROM?



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Stouffville District Secondary School Spartan Dayle Wilkinson appears surprised by a check by Markham District High School Marauder Lizz Lennon during York Region high school action at Stouffville Arena Tuesday. Markham won 2-1.

Spartans rebound from winless year

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA
Staff Writer

The only place the Stouffville District Secondary School Spartans senior boys basketball team could go this season was up.

After going winless last season in York Region high school tier two play, this year's version of the Spartans has done that and more.

Despite an opening-game loss, the Spartans managed to finish the regular season above the .500 mark at 5-3. That tied the Spartans with Keswick High School for fourth place in the East Division. Keswick won out on the tiebreaker.

More important though, the Spartans qualified for postseason play today at Toronto District Christian School at 5:15 p.m.

"Things are definitely looking good. It's definitely a big turnaround from last year," head coach Jeff Fong said.

The presence of Ken Czerwinski has been large.

A six-foot, three-inch centre, Czerwinski attended Stouffville in Grade 9 before transferring to live with his father in Lindsay for two years. This

year, however, he returned to Stouffville to live with his mother and is enrolled for his Grade 12 year.

"He's our big guy in the middle who is a great rebounder and a strong finisher. He's quick and he works hard," Fong said.

There's good chemistry that's developed with his other starters that include co-captains Kyle Law, who plays point guard, and small forward Matt Briggs. Rounding out the starting five are first-year seniors forward Adam Prokop and guard Brodie Atkinson, both Grade 11 players.

"These guys have been with me when I coached the junior team so they know the system I like to run," said Fong, whose team won the York tier two junior title two years ago.

On offence, they're highly structured. On defence, they like to trap.

Hockey boys open playoffs with one-game 'series' today

The Stouffville Spartans senior boys' hockey team begins its second season today when it hosts St. Elizabeth Catholic High School (Thornhill) at the Stouffville Arena at 2 p.m. in a single-game elimination.

The Spartans finished the regular season with a 5-2-1 mark, good for second in the York Region Athletic Association's East Division and fifth overall. St. Elizabeth was last in the West Division with an 0-6-0 mark and 12th overall.

The division winners, including Brother Andre Catholic High School (Markham), Westmount Collegiate Institute (Thornhill) and Huron Heights Secondary School (Newmarket), and the next highest club, Cardinal Carter Catholic High School (Aurora), received first-round byes.

The Spartan girls continued regular season play with a 2-1 loss to Markham Tuesday at the Stouffville Arena.

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HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

Spirit opens playoffs with Cobourg tonight

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA
Staff Writer

The way Stouffville Spirit head coach Dan West looks at the Provincial Junior A Hockey League playoffs, good teams will eventually face an opponent they haven't seen during the regular season.

His Spirit gets its feet wet with an unknown opponent in the East Conference's Cobourg Cougars.

GAMES 1, 2 IN STOUFFVILLE

The first game in the best-of-seven series goes tonight at 7:30 at the Stouffville Arena. Game 2 will also be played in Stouffville, Sunday at 3:30 p.m.

The series moves to Cobourg Monday and Wednesday.

The Cougars, who the Spirit played often in the 1990s, finished the regular season in ninth place with a 15-29-4-1 mark and are in the midst of a seven-game losing streak.

"I don't think facing a team like the Cougars, whom we haven't seen all year, will hurt us," West said.

"It'll be a new challenge for us. And if we go on in the playoffs you will face teams you haven't seen just like what we went through last year."

That would be his club's run to the North-West Conference title in which they defeated the West champion Oakville Blades.

West hopes his charges do not take Cobourg too lightly. The Spirit's advance scouting tells him the Cougars have two good forwards in Dennis Zak, who led the club in scoring with 24 goals and 39 assists, and linemate Patrick Jobb, who was second.

As well, he knows they

have a solid netminder in Dan Clarke, who had 14 wins.

"They'll give us a good challenge. They're a physical club, they work hard and playing in a smaller rink could help them. It won't be easy. But I think we'll be comfortable in playing them," West said.

West says his club, which finished the regular season in second place in the North Conference with a 28-16-3-2 mark, is in relatively good shape.

With two solid netminders in Trevor O'Neill and Mark Kubicz, a veteran defence that has done a solid job in protecting its own end and four solid forward units, West thinks his club should be ready.

"Since Christmas we've lost just two games, both to Aurora (North Conference regular season champions). But we feel confident and good about our chances," he said.

WILL ACTON STILL OUT

About the only concern West has entering the post-season is the status of veteran forward Will Acton, who is still recovering from a concussion. It's highly unlikely the Stouffville resident will see action in the first round.

The Spirit concluded the regular season Monday by battling the host Vaughan Vipers to a 3-3 overtime tie.

Tyler Gubb, Corey Fulton and Frank Salituro scored.

In Orangeville Friday, Myles Gomes scored the game-winning marker and assisted on another in a 3-1 triumph. Midget call-up Daniel Ciampini and rookie phenom Corey Trivino had the other Spirit goals. Kubicz picked up the win in goal.

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