

Stouffville Sun-Tribune

SPORTS



STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

PUCK PUGILISTS

Stouffville's Mitch Butler (in black jersey) goes up against a Unionville Jets player in Novice AE action at Elgin Barrow Arena in Richmond Hill, part of the Stouffville Clipper minor hockey tournament. Stouffville rebounded from a 3-0 deficit to tie the game in the final two minutes of play. See page 18 for the story.

GM out as Spirit clean house

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA
Staff writer

Ken Burrows had a feeling the writing was on the wall.

The question, regarding the status of the Stouffville Spirit's general manager and a member of the club for 11 seasons, was when.

For the 40-year-old Burrows, his tenure with the Provincial Junior A Hockey League club ended Sunday after he was informed by Spirit co-owner Dave Laren his services were no longer required.

Beginning as a scout before moving up to assistant general manager and, eventually, general manager, Burrows' departure came on the heels of the club not renewing head coach Dan West's contract last Tuesday.

Burrows noted his dismissal was not tied to what happened to West.

Rather, he said it evolved over the past five years. During that time, Burrows revealed he had philosophical differences with Laren, who owns the Spirit with Zeev Werek.

"I wasn't surprised at all. I don't think Dave wanted me there from Day One," Burrows speculated.

"He gave me no reason why I was let go other than that we couldn't work together. He (Laren) said right to my face that we didn't get along and I agreed. I think it's time to move on."

Burrows said he had plenty of fond memories that made him proud to be associated with the Spirit.

Among those included the club's Cinderella-like run to the league final in 2006 after upsetting the heavily favoured Aurora Tigers for the North Conference title and Oakville Blades for the North-West Conference crown.

Another took place in the 1999-2000 season when the fifth-place Spirit defeated the first-place Newmarket Hurricanes in the North Conference semifinal in six games.

As well, Burrows said he was glad to be associated with players such as Kevin Jarman and Mike Sullivan, who were drafted by the National Hockey League.

"I've met a lot of great people during my time with the team," he said.

As for what his future, Burrows said he hasn't given it much thought.

While Laren was quick to point out



KEN BURROWS: "I wasn't surprised at all," after let being go by junior A hockey club.

Burrows did a commendable job, he thought the problem stemmed from a lack of communication within the ranks.

"During the year, we brought in a head scout and other people we thought Ken could work with. But I think it was hard on him and he didn't think we needed them. To be a successful organization you need more than one body," Laren said.

"A general manager has to allow other people to succeed in their roles. That's where the breakdown was. Maybe if we had communicated better."

Laren and Werek remain hopeful that, down the road, Burrows might resurface with the club.

"Kenny was a terrific guy who had done a lot for the team. He's been in this community (Stouffville) his whole life and is respected by the hockey community. We still hold him in high esteem," Werek said.

The search for a new coach and general manager is underway.

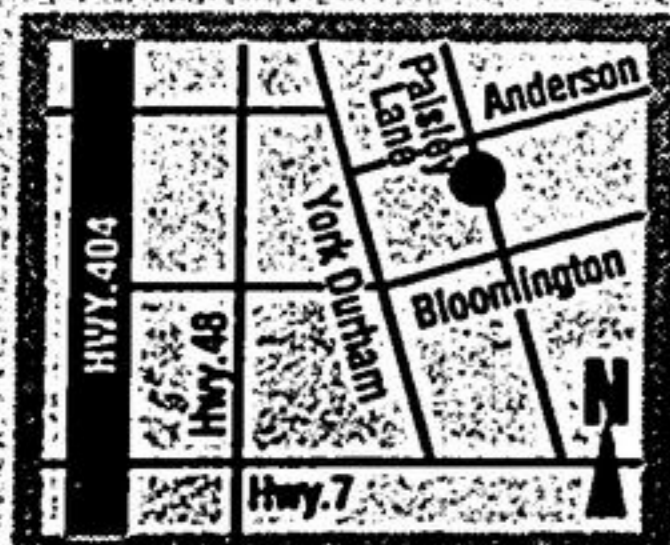
Werek hinted when a new head coach is chosen, an associate coach will also be selected and possibly be given the title of general manager or assistant general manager.

On a separate note, longtime director Jim Mason announced his resignation. Mason had been associated with the Spirit for 10 years.

For more on the Spirit, check out www.stouffvillespirit.com

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