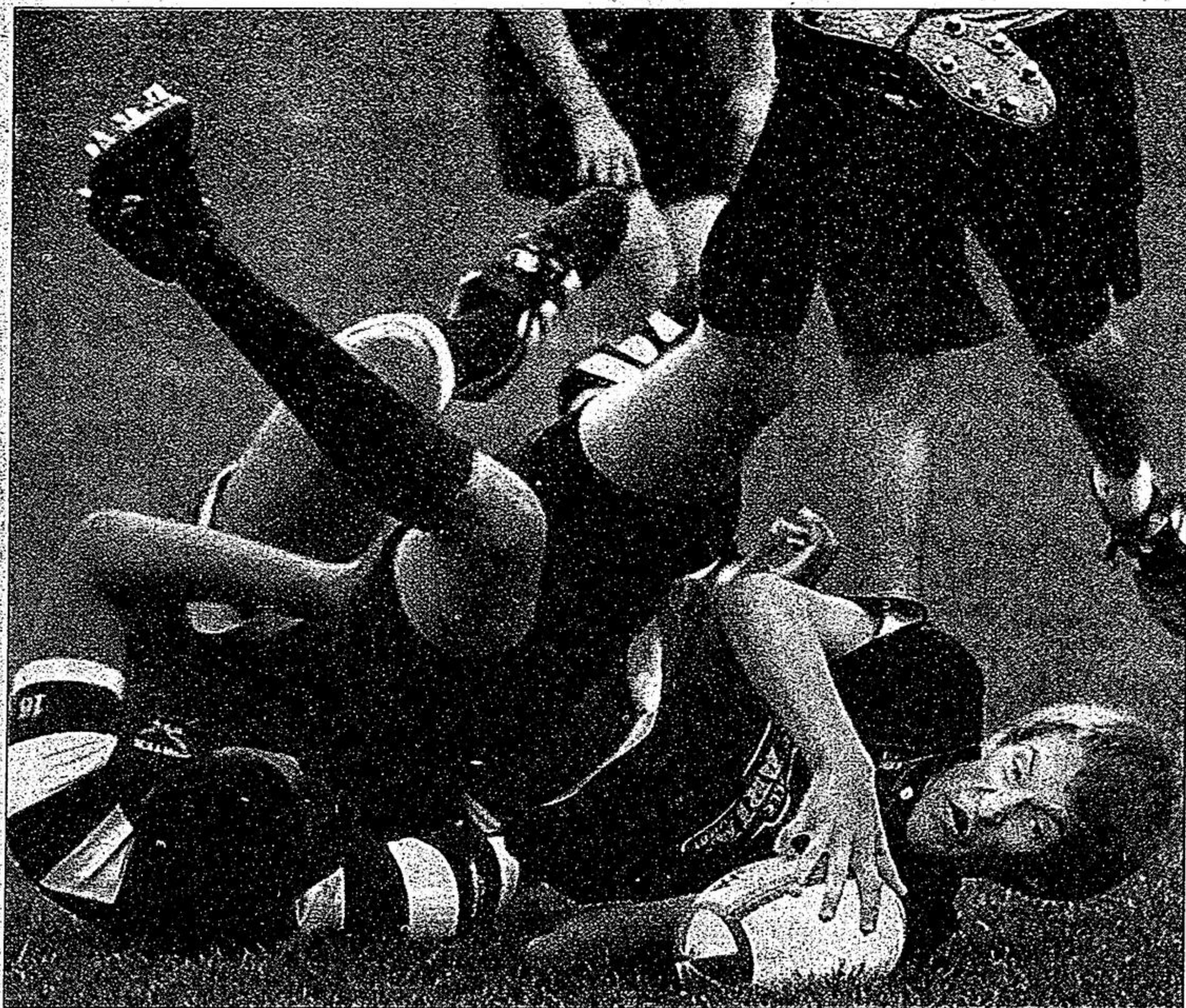


SPORTS

Stouffville District Secondary School junior Spartan Jeremy Brownridge is upended during his team's 47-5 win over Porter of Scarborough at last week's rugby sevens tournament in Markham.



STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

Rugby team preps for England

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA
Staff Writer

The Stouffville District Secondary School Spartans senior boys take a different approach to fall rugby season than the traditional spring York Region Athletic Association campaign.

Winning isn't everything at this time of year for the defending Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations AA champions.

Most important to Spartans head coach Jamie Hewitt is that his players, particularly those who aren't in starting roles, progress.

In last week's sevens tournament at Fletcher's Field in Markham, Hewitt saw plenty of positives, despite losing in the quarter-finals to O'Neill Collegiate (Oshawa) 26-12.

Dylan Stewart and Jamie Gregory each had one try for the Spartans. Joe Beare booted a convert.

With three players in their regular positions, the Spartans went undefeated in pool play posting wins over Medway High School (Arva) 29-7, Brebeuf College High School (Toronto) 38-0

and Dunbarton High School (Pickering) 31-7.

Hewitt is also using these games as tuneup to several friendlies his club will play.

Included in that schedule are games Oct. 23 against a touring Blessed Edward club from England and Oct. 30 against a touring Breckon team from Wales.

Both matches will be played at the old SDSS field.

As well, the team will be making an overseas trip to England in the March break.

The Spartan lost in the tourney final to Lorne Park Secondary School (Mississauga) 29-10. Scott Miller and Jesse Lofthouse scored tries.

The juniors went undefeated in pool play as they defeated Twin Lakes Secondary School (Orillia) 21-0, W.A. Porter Secondary School (Scarborough) 47-5, Mentor College (Mississauga) 42-0. In the quarter-finals, the Spartans defeated O'Neill Collegiate (Oshawa) 21-7 and Barrie Central Secondary School 21-14 in its semifinal encounter.

The Spartans second junior entry

and advanced to the quarter-finals before losing to Barrie Central 28-14.

The Spartans lost their first match to Dr. J.F. Dennison Secondary School (Newmarket) 21-5 but rebounded to defeat Sir Winston Churchill Collegiate (Scarborough) 21-7 and E.E. Madill Secondary School (Wingham) 27-5.

The Spartan bantams, meanwhile, captured the sevens tournament title last Thursday at Fletcher's Field with a 30-12 win over O'Neill Collegiate in the final.

Tom Mintchev, coach of the first-year Grade 9 entry, couldn't have been more pleased with the way his club performed, as they went undefeated in six matches.

The Spartans seniors, juniors and bantams will resume play Oct. 4 at the old Stouffville District Secondary School field when they host Alexander MacKenzie Secondary School and Dr. J.F. Dennison in a three-team Tri Nations Cup tournament starting at 3 p.m.

The Spartan seniors will also compete in a 10s tournament at Fletcher's Field Oct. 11.

Spirit prepares for life without Randy

LAST WEEK: Saturday - won 7-4 against Seguin Bruins. Now 4-2-2-8 on season; fourth place in North Conference.

COMING UP: Tonight vs. Orangeville Crushers, 7:30 p.m.; Friday at Aurora Tigers, 7:30 p.m.

GAME NOTES: The Spirit concluded the month of September on a winning note after posting their second straight victory, a 7-4 road win over the Seguin Bruins. The Spirit took a 1-0 lead after 20 minutes when 18-year-old Stouffville resident Craig McDowell scored his first goal as a member of the club. The Spirit padded their advantage in the second period to 3-0 on unanswered goals by team captain Randy Johnston, who may have played his last game as a Spirit, before departing for Charlotte, N.C. in addition with their Checkers' East Coast Hockey League club, and McDowell, with his second. After the Bruins scored their first goal of the game, Johnston netted his second of the contest to restore the Spirit's three-goal advantage. But the Bruins staged a rally with two unanswered goals to cut the Spirit lead to 4-3 before James McIntosh cooled off the Seguin comeback with two goals to give Stouffville a 6-3 lead after 40 minutes. Donovan Munro padded the Spirit advantage to 7-3 early in the third period before the Bruins scored their final goal before regulation time expired. Trevor O'Neill handled netminding duties for the Spirit.

NOTEBOOK: Forward Mark Sullivan did not suit up for Saturday's game because he was attending to a family function. Sullivan though, will return to the roster for tonight's game against Orangeville... His brother and Spirit grad Mike Sullivan was demoted from Iowa of the American Hockey League to Idaho of the ECHL this week. Both teams are Dallas Stars' affiliates... Two former Spirit players were vying for positions on the Lakehead University Wolves varsity hockey team in Thunder Bay. Forward Konrad Bruetsch will continue to practise with the club as a redshirt while first-year defenceman Stephen Kapolnas was one of four players released Sunday... Former Spirit forward Michael Duco, 20, has signed with



the Rochester Americans of the AHL. A member of the Spirit in the 2003-04 campaign, Duco scored a goal for the Americans in an exhibition game in Hagersville Saturday... Six members of the Spirit volunteered at the harness races at the Markham Fair Sunday. Spirit general manager Matt Gibson said their appearance was all a part of the club's mandate to be more visible in the community.

GENERALLY SPEAKING: "We had a great first period, one of our best so far this year, but in our second period we lost some momentum and then we had a good third period. We're still trying to grow as a team," Spirit head coach Dave D'Amizio, said of his club's inconsistent performance Saturday. "We've had guys in and out of our lineup and not much time to practice and we're still trying to work some new guys in."

As for losing Johnston, D'Amizio is confident other players on the club will step up to fill his void.

"His gains are our loss. It's bittersweet because we want him to move into the next level. We didn't overly plan for (his departure to Charlotte). But we have some other guys who are playing good hockey. We're a deep team and have guys who can step in."

With Johnston in Charlotte, Gibson said they will not name a new captain until they found out if he makes the Checkers or not.

"We've got deep leadership right now. If Randy makes the team we'll make the appropriate decision as to naming a new team captain," he said.

INSIDER: For live scoring and updates, go to pointstreak.com. For more on the Spirit, go to stouffvillespirit.com.

-Mike Hayakawa



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