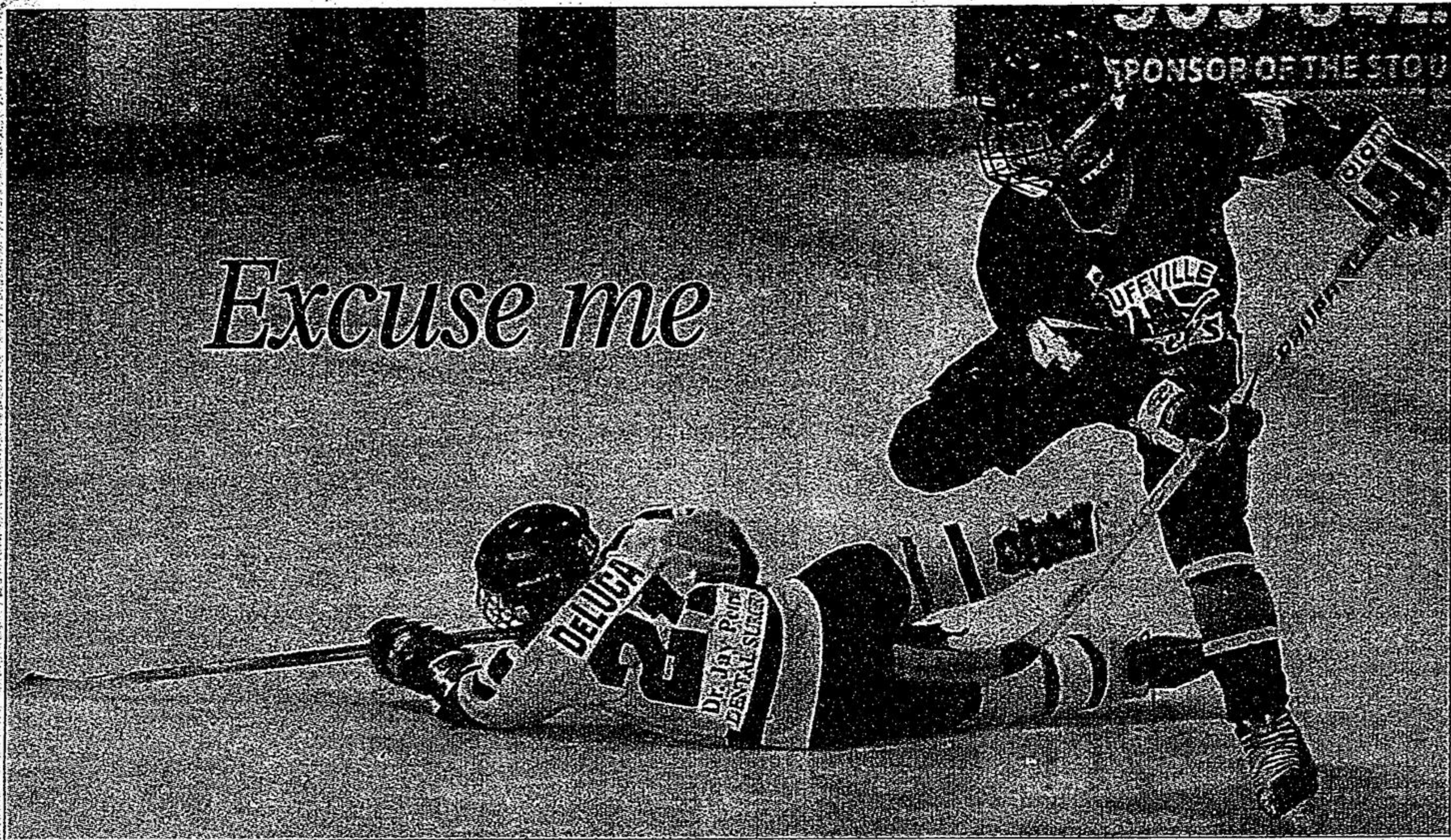


SPORTS



Excuse me

Stouffville minor bantam AE Clipper Chris Matsoukas jumps over a sprawling Travis DeLuca of Pickering during the Whitchurch-Stouffville Minor Hockey Association tournament at the Stouffville Arena last weekend. Stouffville won 5-2.

STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Home rink advantage

Stouffville teams win 2 titles at weekend hockey tourney

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA
Staff Writer

Stouffville Clippers' head coach Grant Nesbitt believes there's no substitute for hard work.

His peewee A team believed that when they faced archrival Bradford in one of four finals in the Whitchurch-Stouffville Minor Hockey Association's tournament Sunday.

The tourney, for peewee A, bantam A, minor bantam AE and minor midget A teams, featured 27 squads from as far away as Sudbury and Sarnia at the Stouffville Arena.

Stouffville teams won two of four championships.

Trailing 2-1 entering the third period of Sunday's final, the peewee Clippers got the equalizer and set the stage for overtime.

In the three-on-three extra session, Ryan Kernohan scored the game-winning goal enabling the Clippers to prevail 3-2 and hand Bradford their first loss of the season.

"Our guys really worked hard, they never gave up," said Nesbitt, who has coached minor hockey teams in Stouffville since the 1980s.

"We've got a good team and a good group of boys. Hopefully, we will meet Bradford again in our playoffs."

In reaching the final, the Clippers defeated West-Hill 3-0, tied Bradford 1-1 and defeated Innisfil 2-1.

Other team members are goalkeepers Matthew Espey and Matthew Morrow; Jonathan Colley, Nicholas Robb, Sean Hoey, Mack McLean, Ryan Peterson, team captain Troy Connor, Hayden Ellison, Keaton Major, Zack McMahon, Devin King, Konnor Eden, Jordan Marsh and Connor Miller.

In the minor midget A final, the Clippers blanked Ted Reeve 4-0.

Oliver Boettcher, Zach Burke, Jake Woolnough and Peter Lebuffe each scored once. Marcel Cenic posted the shutout.

Clippers head coach Joe Sutherland credited his players' success to their work ethic, especially after losing their first game to Ted Reeve 3-1 Friday.

"That game was a wake-up call," he said. "We played poorly. It was one of our

worst games we've played all year."

The Clippers rebounded to throttle Parry Sound 8-0 and tie Essex 2-2 before advancing to the semifinals. There, they downed East Gwillimbury 3-1.

"It all came down to how hard the kids worked. They won all of the individual battles," Sutherland said of the championship game.

For the Clippers, the tournament title was their second championship of the season.

Other team members are Ben Singh, Josh Whitehead, Brad Sutherland, Peter Wideman, Dylan Deveaux, Scott Miller, Josh King, Chris Chekay, Brent Hewett, Lloyd Davis, Ryan Brown, Brett Kirkness and Tyler Barber.

A third Clippers entry, the minor bantam AES, won its first game over Pickering 5-2 and then battled Oshawa to a 0-0 tie before suffering losses to Orangeville 2-1 and London Oakridge 4-1.

Other tournament winners included Caledon in the minor bantam AE division with a 1-0 decision over Orangeville and Walden from the Sudbury area, in the bantam A final with a 4-3 overtime victory over Vaughan.

Spirit goalie leads league in shutouts

LAST WEEK: Saturday - won 7-0 against host Orangeville Crushers. Now 12-7-3-27 on season, fifth place in North Conference.

COMING UP: Today vs Villanova Knights at Stouffville Arena, 7:35 p.m.; Friday at Aurora Tigers, 7:30 p.m.

GAME NOTES: In routing the Orangeville Crushers 7-0 Saturday, Stouffville Spirit head coach Dave D'Amazio gave credit in part to the schedule maker. Just 24 hours earlier, the sixth-place Crushers upended the North Conference-leading Newmarket Hurricanes 2-1 in a shootout.

In doing so, D'Amazio speculated his club might have caught the Crushers a bit off guard.

But at the same time, he was quick to credit his charges, who did what they had to do to skate away with two points. After a scoreless first period, the Spirit struck for three unanswered goals to take a 3-0 lead after 40 minutes. Spirit captain Randy Johnston and Mark Sullivan scored just seven seconds apart, and Darren Archibald accounted for the other marker.

The Spirit onslaught continued in the third period when James McIntosh scored at the 1:26 mark followed by goals from Trevor Smith, Ethan Werek and Matt McCann, with his first since joining the Spirit in a deal from the Crushers. Trevor O'Neill stopped 24 shots to post his Provincial Junior A Hockey League-leading fifth shutout. The Spirit had 51 shots.

NOTEBOOK: The Spirit played Saturday's game without forward Corey Trivino, who was nursing a sore shoulder from the World Junior A Challenge. D'Amazio hopes the second-year veteran will return for Friday's game against defending national champion Aurora. The Spirit sold defenceman Chris Tanev to the Markham Waxers Friday. Tanev, 17, came to the Spirit in a recent trade with the Durham Fury for Matt West-



lake and Tim Halloran.

On Sunday, Spirit general manager Thomas Milne sent forward Scott Johnstone to the Dixie BeeHives for forward Matt Viola.

Viola, 19, played last season with the Newmarket Hurricanes before going to the BeeHives this year and had eight goals and nine assists in 20 games.

"He brings big-time speed," Milne said. "He'll be one of the fastest guys on the team and he has grit. He'll be a perfect third liner. He knows his role on the team and he adds depth. Any of our lines can score at any time."

Johnstone had one goal and one assist in seven games for the Spirit.

In a separate transaction, the Spirit sent rookie forward Taylor Law to the Durham Fury for cash.

GENERALLY SPEAKING: "I think we caught (Orangeville) on a high after they beat Newmarket. Fortunately we were able to put the puck in the net," D'Amazio said.

"We had contributions from all four lines. The transition of having the guys back (Werek, McIntosh, Trivino and Daniel Spivak from the World Junior A Challenge) are settling the rest of the guys down and we competed for three periods. It sure makes a difference in having the four guys back."

And then there's O'Neill. "He's been playing great and he's finding his groove."

INSIDER: Listen to Spirit games at whistleradio.com. For live scoring and statistics, go to pointstreak.com.

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

—Mike Hayakawa

It scored 96.

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