

SPORTS

Mac makes it 6-pack of Spirit scholarships

To play at Bowling Green in NCAA pucks next year

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA
Staff Writer

James McIntosh is breathing a big sigh of relief. The third-year Stouffville Spirit forward knows where he'll play when the Provincial Junior A Hockey League ends.

After last Thursday's 6-3 win over Aurora, the 18-year-old Holland Landing native accepted a National Collegiate Athletic Association Division One scholarship offer to Bowling Green State University this fall and play hockey for the Falcons hockey team. He's the sixth Spirit player this season to earn a Division One scholarship, a team record.

"It was a relief but not in the sense that I was worried about getting a scholarship, but more so now I can stop worrying about next year and start focusing on my game this year and try to help the Spirit get to where we want to be," he said.

Once Bowling Green found out other schools were knocking on McIntosh's door they arranged for a visit to their campus.

It worked.

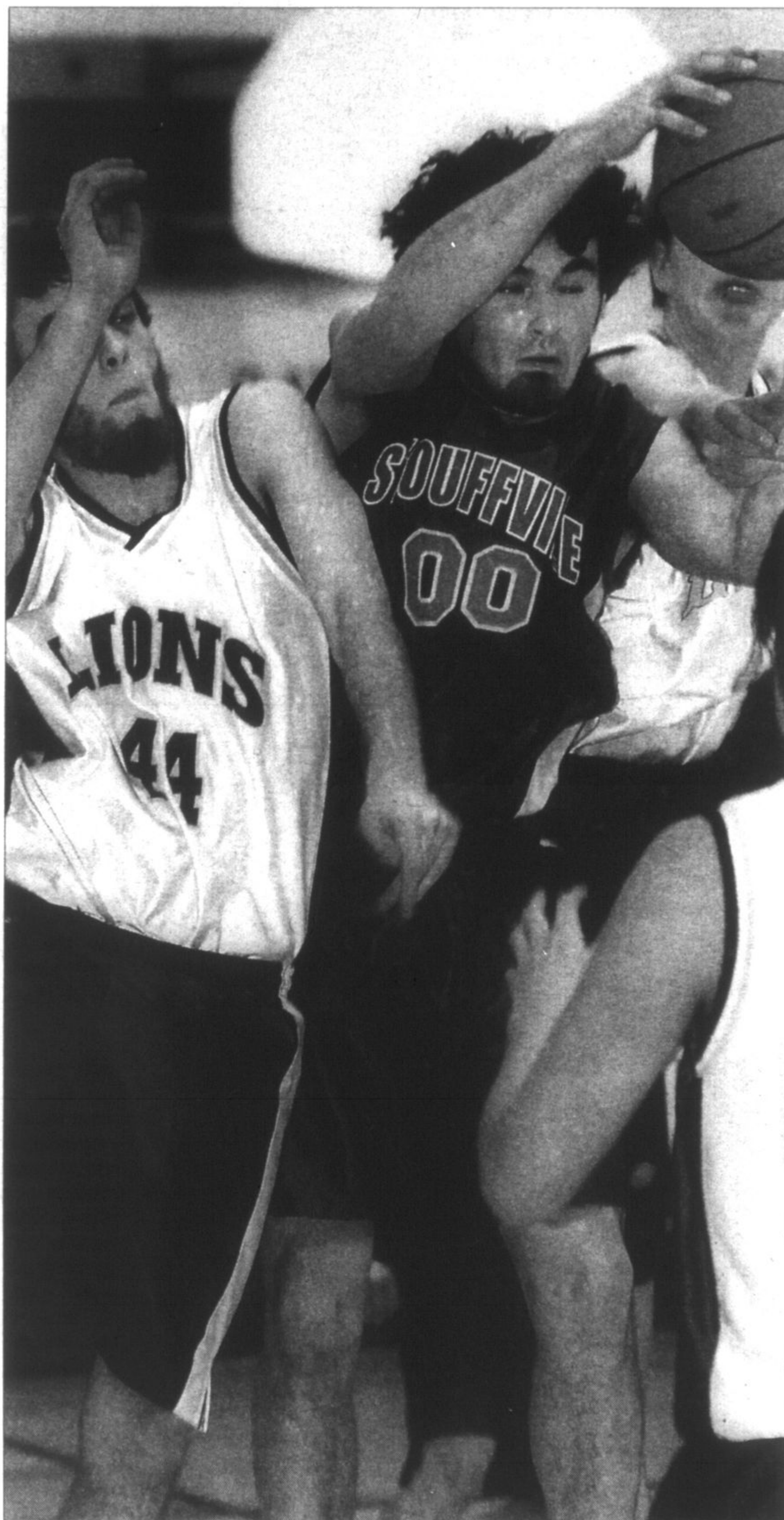
"There were so many things that made Bowling Green the place I wanted to go," he said. "The players and coaches are great. The facilities are awesome and only going to get better. Its only 4 1/2 hours away from home. They want to win and always get better. It's a great campus, the fans are great and it was a great feeling. And I just think its the perfect place for me to be for the next four years."

Bowling Green stayed in contact on a weekly basis and gave him all the time he needed to make a decision.

Spirit coach Dave D'Ammizio was confident McIntosh would get a full ride.

"We knew he'd have a chance and I'm ecstatic to see him move on to the next level," he said. "He worked hard all summer and had a good year last year and continued throughout this year. He's a gamer. He brings his intensity every night and he's a strong kid with good skills. It was well deserved of what he got."

BATTLE OF HIGH SCHOOL BEARDS



STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

Stouffville District Secondary School's Kenny Czerwinski (00) has control of the ball as he battles with King City Secondary School's Jonah Granberg (44) during their York Region high school senior basketball game in King City Friday. Stouffville, which won 49-25, plays at Dr. J.M. Dennison Secondary School in Newmarket today. For more on the Spartans, see story on page 23.

Games get tougher for streaking Spirit

LAST WEEK: Saturday - won 4-1 against Villanova Knights. Now 24-11-3-51 on season, fifth place in North Conference.

COMING UP: Tonight vs. Huntsville-Muskoka Otters at Stouffville Arena, 7:35 p.m.; Friday at Couchiching Terriers, 7:30 p.m.; Saturday at Seguin Bruins, 7:30 p.m.

GAME NOTES: The Stouffville Spirit extended its winning streak to six games Saturday by defeating the Villanova Knights for the fifth time this season, a 4-1 decision at the Ice Sports Centre at York University Saturday. Utilizing just three lines and five defencemen, the Spirit jumped out to a 2-0 lead after 20 minutes on a power-play goal by Dustin Laren and even-strength marker by Ethan Werek with just 48 seconds left in the period. A power-play goal by Mark Sullivan and even-strength tally by James McIntosh in the second period enabled the Spirit to pad their lead to 4-0 after 40 minutes. Wes Annis handled 34 of 35 shots to earn the win while the Spirit took 33 shots on net.

NOTEBOOK: The Spirit played Saturday's game without the services of several players, including team captain Randy Johnston, Corey Trivino, defenceman Jarred Seymour and Tom Kokelj. Johnston has a concussion while Trivino has a shoulder injury and Seymour a minor knee injury. Kokelj was serving a one-game suspension from a fight in last Thursday's 6-3 win over the Aurora Tigers. Seymour and Kokelj are expected to return for today's game against the Huntsville-Muskoka Otters. Johnston and Trivino are out indefinitely. The Spirit had two players named to the league's all-star game Jan. 23 at the Al Palladini Centre in Vaughan as Johnston and McIntosh were chosen to represent the North-West roster. Gametime is set for 7:30 p.m. The Spirit had their Dec. 16 road game against the Newmarket Hurricanes rescheduled to Jan. 29 at the Ray Twinney Complex at 7:30 p.m.

Spirit general manager Tom Milne still a player card remaining to use but won't fill it for the sake of using them all up as he does not want to disrupt the current team chemistry.



GENERALLY SPEAKING: "We gave some people who don't normally get a lot of ice time a chance to play and they performed," Spirit head coach Dave D'Ammizio said of Saturday's win.

While happy to be riding a six-game streak, D'Ammizio hopes the players are not dwelling on their recent success as they will be playing a gruelling three games in as many nights starting tonight when they host the Otters and then go on the road for contests against the Couchiching Terriers Friday and Seguin Bruins Saturday. These games, he said, could hold the fate of the club if they hope to move up in the North Conference standings.

"Right now there's no time to be happy with what we've done.

"If we want to move up in the standings these games are must have. Especially the ones against Huntsville and Couchiching. But we can't overlook Seguin either especially since we are playing in their rink," he said.

ALUMNI WATCH: Simon Gysbers had a goal and two assists to lead Lake Superior State to a 4-1 win over Bowling Green in NCAA action in Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., Saturday. The big sophomore defenceman played for three years in Spiritland...goaltender Dan McWhinney, the hero in the Spirit's twin championships of two seasons ago, is struggling with a weak Amarillo, Texas, team in the Central Hockey League. He's 6-15-4...Dan Speer, who played for the Spirit as a 14-year-old, has a 14-game points for CSI's sixth-ranked Lakehead University.

INSIDER: For live scoring and updates, go to pointstreak.com

For more on the Spirit, go to its re-launched web site: stouffville-spirit.com

-Mike Hayakawa



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