

Spirit owner hopes recruiting doesn't extend to hockey staff

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA
Staff Writer

If Zeev Werek has his way, next season's version of the Stouffville Spirit won't change much.

The co-owner watched his team get eliminated by Aurora Friday in the North Conference final of the Provincial Jr. A Hockey League.

"Sure I'm disappointed that our season is over," Werek said while attending Monday's Markham Waxers-St. Michael's Buzzers South Conference final game. "In our hearts we thought we had the team that could go the distance."

He hopes head coach Dave D'Amizio and general manager

Thomas Milne return.

Milne, who joined the Spirit part way through the season, said he will have meetings with Werek and co-owner David Laren this week.

"I hope to have an answer by Sunday. I hope they want me to come back," Milne said.

Werek said discussions will

begin tonight when players and front office personnel assemble for the annual year-end photograph.

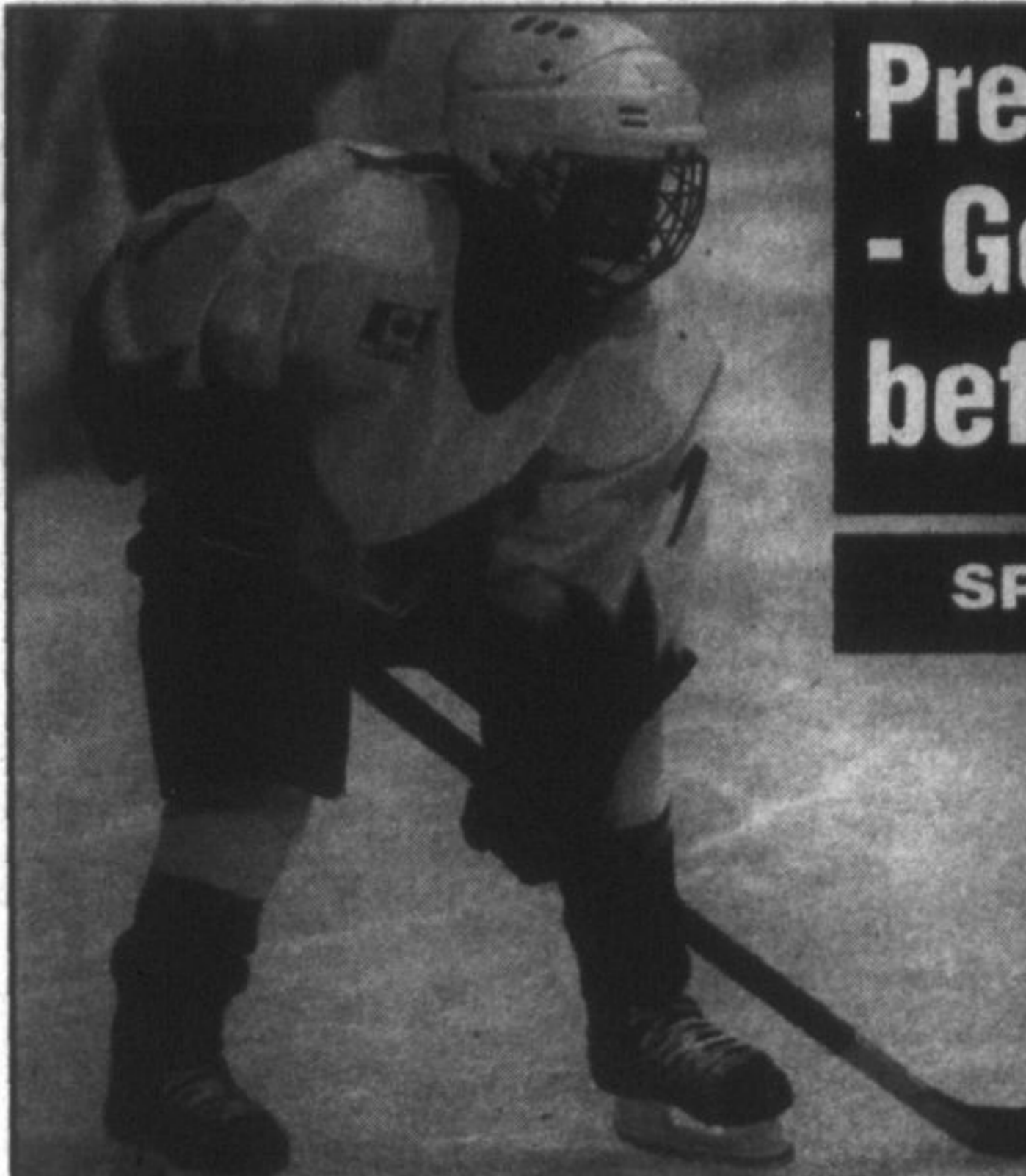
"I don't want to make any changes," Werek said. "We hope things will remain status quo."

Werek acknowledged the team has big holes to fill, especially at forward. Corey Trivino and James

McIntosh are off on NCAA scholarships. Randy Johnston, Corey Fulton, Mark Sullivan and Jonathan Cristini will be too old for junior.

The lone defenceman exiting is Daniel Spivak, who will attend Rochester Institute of Technology.

Recruiting is well under way, Werek said.



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Attitude has minor peewees on cusp

The Stouffville minor peewee Clippers finished in second place in their division when the Ontario Minor Hockey Association York Simcoe regular season concluded.

But these days, the Clippers are still playing while Bradford, who finished atop the regular season standings, are on the outside looking in.

The Clippers were aiming for some lofty honours when they gained a berth in the OMHA A finals.

And they are on the cusp of capturing that coveted title after winning the first two games by scores of 4-0 in Friday's opening tilt at the Stouffville Arena and 3-1 Saturday in Brampton.

The Clippers have a chance to clinch the title Saturday when they host Brampton Youth at Stouffville Arena at 3:10 p.m.

► Go to omha.net for more information.

In qualifying for the final, Clippers head coach Rick Sooley felt his club had the right ingredients to achieve their preseason goal.

The key, he said, has been work ethic and mental fortitude.

"We have a group of kids that are hard-working, willing to learn and really love the game," said Sooley, a 12-year veteran coach in the Whitchurch Stouffville Minor Hockey Association system. "And we have a dedicated coaching staff and supportive parents."

Sooley also noted the team, which compiled a 19-7-1 regular season mark, possessed plenty of veteran savvy as just three new faces were added to this year's

roster.

They hadn't seen Brampton this year before the finals started last weekend.

"Any team that makes it to the Ontario finals is a strong team, so it should be a good series," he said.

Ken MacDonald and Joe Lombardo are assisting Sooley behind the bench.

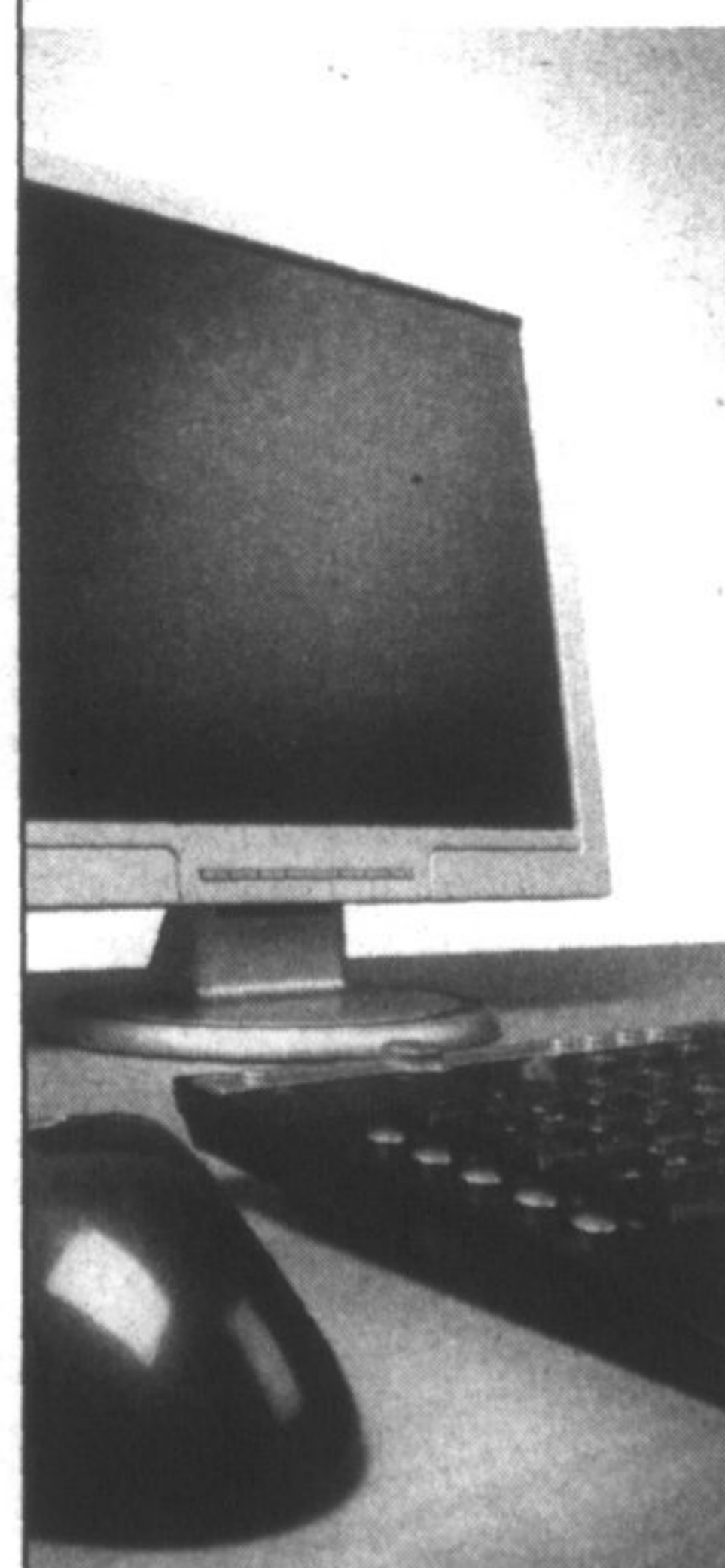
The players are goalkeepers Patrick Coutts and Cameron Nowikow and Robbie Armstrong, Matthew Avoledo, Josh Burkholder, Chris Cadaret, Matthew Carrick, Justin Dube, Jack English, Cody Femia, Bobby Lamirande, Owen Pearce, Spencer Roberts, Evan Smith, Mitchell Smith, Eric Zambri and Chris Jarrett.

Mike Vandervoort is the trainer and Trish Burkholder and Wendy Armstrong are managers.

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