

Stouffville team drives off with hardware

The Stouffville-based Team 3 Red/EHR racing team drove off with several awards at last weekend's NASCAR Canadian Tire Series banquet and awards ceremony in Markham.

In addition to being honoured for winning the final race of the season in late September at the Kawartha Speedway, the team was recognized for its efforts in garnering a ninth-place finish in driver and owner points.

With Jason Hathaway driving the team's Snap-on Tools Dodge, the team finished fourth in the Mopar Fast Five program.

Hathaway was also the recipient of the series officials-nominated driver achievement award.

The award recognized Hathaway and his team for their improved track performance this year, including notching the team's first NASCAR series win.

Uncle knew best for scoring leader

McCann steps up game with assist from Harvard coach

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA
Staff Writer

When the Stouffville Spirit sought players to upgrade their roster last season, they found a bargain in Matt McCann.

Acquired from the Orangeville Crushers for cash, McCann didn't exactly take the Spirit by storm as he compiled just one goal and six assists in 31 regular season games while playing on the club's third or fourth forward line.

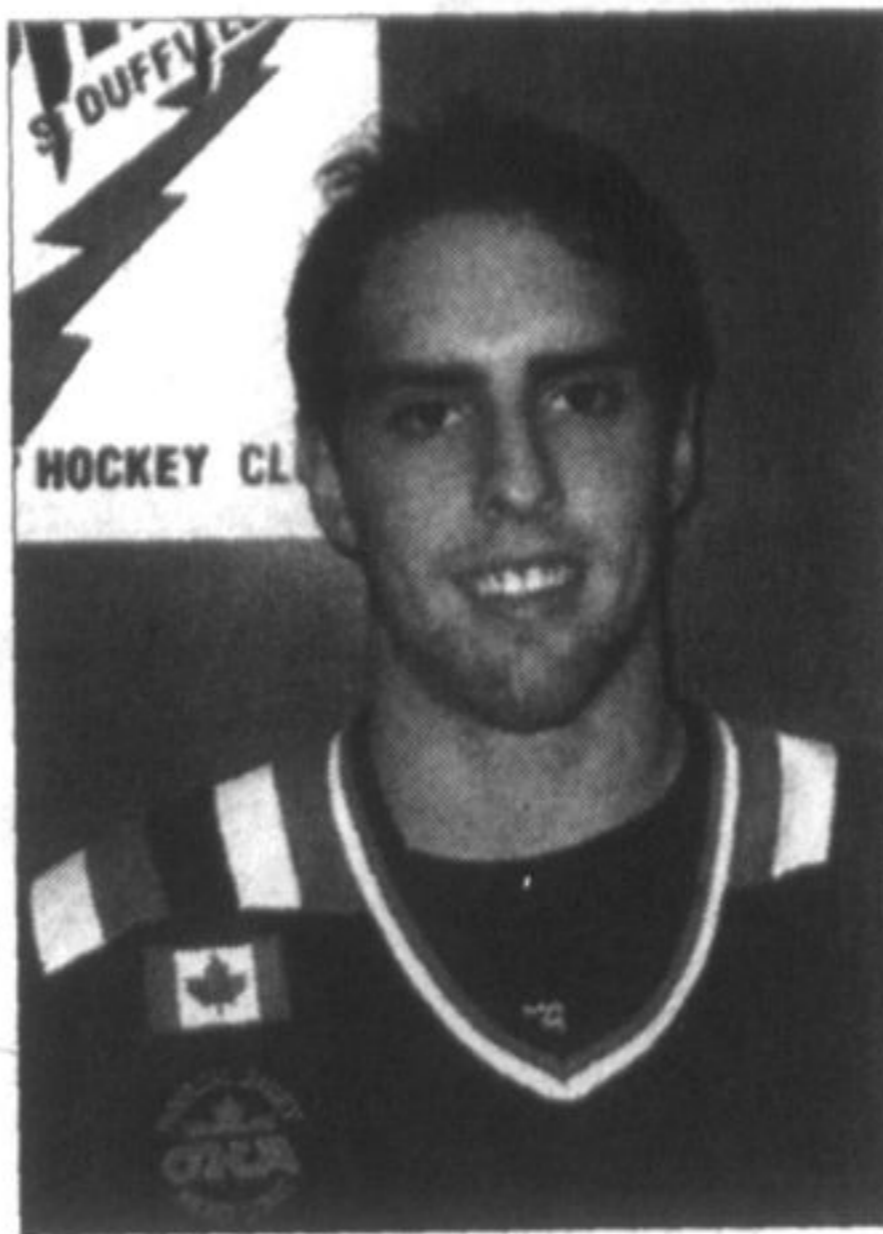
The Newmarket resident took a backseat to some highly talented teammates, including Corey Trivino, Ethan Werek and James McIntosh.

This season though, the 20-year-old McCann has paid dividends on a club mired in the Ontario Junior Hockey League's Central Division basement.

Through 19 contests this season, McCann led the club in scoring with 14 goals and 12 assists.

Launching his minor hockey career as a goalie at the age of eight before electing to move out to play forward three years later, McCann attributed his early season offensive prowess to a couple of factors.

Advice from his uncle, Sean



MATT McCANN: Newmarket resident went from fourth line to scoring leader with Stouffville Spirit.

McCann, an assistant coach with the Harvard University men's hockey team, worked.

"I did a lot of training during the summer and was doing the Harvard University training program," he said.

The five-foot, 11-inch, 187-pound McCann also praises linemates Dustin Laren, who is also in his second season with the Spirit, and rookie Massimo Lamacchia.

McCann noted the trio were assembled during the club's first victory of the season against the Newmarket Hurricanes 4-3 in a shootout Sept. 14. McCann netted the winning goal.

"It didn't take us long to get going. We've worked pretty

well together and just try to put the puck in the net," McCann said.

Being one of just five returning forwards this season, McCann takes great pride in being a leader.

"I knew that I had to step it up and try to lead the team," he said. "So far I like it."

Mark Joslin, Spirit general manager and head coach, acknowledged McCann's performance so far has been one of the club's few bright spots.

"When I talked with him during the summer he realized his situation where there would only be five returning forwards. I think he sensed the urgency and realized the situation. Because of that he's worked out hard all summer on and off the ice. His strength has improved. All he needed was an opportunity and he's made the most of it.

"He's a great team kid who is strong willed and has a great work ethic. He cares about his game right now and he wants to go to the next level," Joslin said.

With this season being McCann's last in tier two junior A eligibility, he hopes to follow in the footsteps of his uncle Sean, who also played his collegiate hockey at Harvard University as a defenceman and captained the team in his senior year.

While McCann hasn't had

Spirit loses 17th game in 20 starts this season

The Stouffville Spirit lost its 17th game in 20 starts this season Thursday, a 3-1 decision to the Cobourg Cougars at the Stouffville Arena.

The Spirit outshot, 32-26, and outchanced the Cougars. But only Don Maloney Jr. could beat Cobourg goalie Troy Webster.

Attendance was 147.

The Spirit, which played in Wellington last night, is home to Hamilton Thursday.

With eight points, the Spirit is tied with Pickering with the third fewest points in the 37-team Ontario Junior Hockey League.

any concrete offers from National Collegiate Athletic Association Division One schools yet, he's had discussions with a couple of colleges.

If McCann continues to lead the Spirit on and off the ice as he's done to date, he's confident something positive will come his way before the season concludes.

"There's definitely some interest. I just have to stay consistent," he said.

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