

Stouffville Sun-Tribune

SPORTS

Spirit threatens blockbuster deal

LAST WEEK: Sunday - lost 7-2 vs. Toronto Junior Canadiens; Monday - lost 8-2 vs. Hamilton Red Wings. One win, two shootout wins, two shootout losses, 21 losses for nine points. Last place in Central Division.

COMING UP: Tonight vs. Markham Waxers at Stouffville Arena, 7:30 p.m.; Sunday at Newmarket Hurricanes, 3:30 p.m.

GAME NOTES: The Stouffville Spirit have travelled through more valleys than peaks during this Ontario Junior Hockey League campaign. But in the last two contests, the Spirit hit what club general manager and head coach Mark Joslin described as "rock bottom" after being lambasted on the road by the Toronto Junior Canadiens 7-2 Sunday and the Hamilton Red Wings 8-2 Monday. In Sunday's loss, Jake Dellavalle and Matt McCann scored for the Spirit, who were in the game for one period after trailing 1-0 before the roof caved in and they fell behind 6-1 through 40 minutes. Against the Red Wings, Dellavalle and Donald Maloney scored for the Spirit, which trailed 4-0 after the first and second periods. Kori Coelho started in goal for the Spirit before giving way to Michael D'Angelo when the Red Wings were up 7-2 in the third period.

INSIDER: The Spirit bolstered their forward line Sunday by adding Stouffville native Brandon Walker to their roster. The Ryerson University student, who played for the school two seasons ago, also had stints with the Spirit and Aurora Tigers in 2005 and 2006. The 20-year-old former draft pick of the Ontario Hockey League's Plymouth Whalers is expected to provide some leadership. Walker collected an assist in Monday's loss to the Red Wings.

"He will be a welcomed addition. He's an experienced player and comes from good structure where he's had good coaching. He will put the puck in the net for us," Joslin said. The Spirit lost defenceman Jarred Seymour in the first period of Monday's game thanks to a leg



injury. His status is questionable for tonight's home game against the Markham Waxers.

The Spirit dealt forward Matt Viola to the Grande Prairie Storm of the Alberta Junior Hockey League for cash last Thursday.

"He asked if there was anybody interested in him to try and further his exposure for a possible college hockey scholarship and we tried to oblige," Joslin said. "He's a good kid and we wanted to help him out."

After declining to report to the North Bay Skyhawks of the Northern Ontario Junior Hockey League, former Spirit forward Chad Beal was dealt by the club to the Orangeville Crushers for cash.

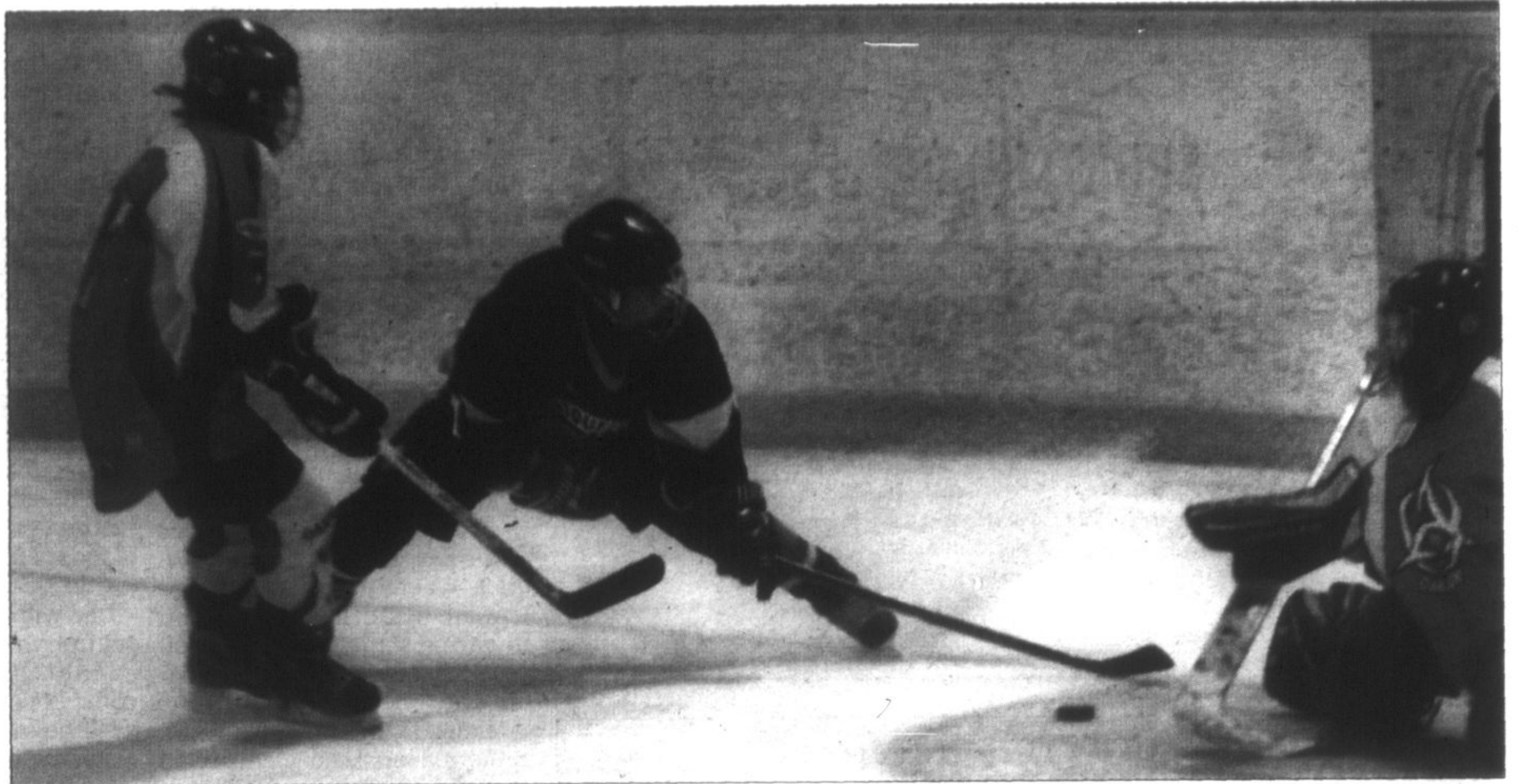
Former Spirit goalkeeper Dan McWhinney was waived by the Wichita Thunder of the Central Hockey League. He is in the Kansas city hoping to get work elsewhere.

GENERALLY SPEAKING: "We're definitely at a low point where we've hit rock bottom," Joslin said Tuesday. "Everything is magnified when you're losing. We get a great scoring chance and we miss and the other team gets a marginal scoring opportunity and they score. If you're serious you've got to persevere. We've got some young guys on the team who are willing to do it and some of the older guys aren't. That's not a good thing."

"I think we have to make a blockbuster trade to shake things up," he said.

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

-Mike Hayakawa



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Stouffville peewee Clipper Spencer Roberts does the splits and gets a shot on London Oakridge's Mitchell Willoughby as Ryan Martin checks him during tourney action at the Stouffville Arena Saturday. The peewee and minor midgets Clippers won titles.

Two Clipper teams keep trophies at home

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA
Staff Writer

Two Stouffville Clippers teams familiar with the winner's circle iced titles and another won second-place during a Whitchurch Stouffville Minor Hockey Association tournament last weekend.

The tourney drew 26 peewee A, bantam A, minor midget A and midget A teams from across Ontario to the Stouffville Arena.

The Clippers minor midgets won their division crown with a hard-fought 3-1 win over the Vaughan Panthers Sunday.

ARENA ICE MALFUNCTION

In the peewee division, the Clippers had an easy time of things after defeating Oakridge (London) 6-0 in their title tilt.

Both teams won Ontario Minor Hockey Associations A titles as bantams and minor peewees, respectively, last spring.

The Clipper midgets advanced to the final against the Markham Waxers but were blanked 2-0.

In the minor midget division, the Clippers defeated the Scarborough Sabres 5-0 and Willowdale Blackhawks 10-1 in round-robin play.

The Clippers' third game against Essex was cancelled due to a malfunction on Pad A that resulted in 10 hours of ice time being lost. Both teams had advanced to the playoff round.

The Clippers then blanked Hillcrest 4-0 in a semifinal game and advanced to the final where they faced the Panthers, a team they had met as bantams in April at the

Ontario Hockey Federation finals.

"We had a pretty good feeling coming into the tournament that it could be Stouffville and Vaughan in the final," Clippers' head coach Don Easter said. "They (Panthers) were the GTHL champions last year and they're leading their division again this year. They're a good team and any time we play them it's going to be a close game. We're registered in the Vaughan Silver Stick qualifying tournament during Christmas so what's turning out to be a good rivalry could resume at that time."

The Clippers jumped out to a 2-1 lead after one period on goals by Daniel Perry and Chris Smith.

No further goals were scored until the third period when Connor Cadaret added an insurance marker into an empty net. Cadaret also collected an assist along with David Beloff and Josh Machesney.

Helping to preserve the win was excellent netminding from Kyle Pontone, the most valuable player of the final.

Easter attributed his club's success to their speed and puck movement.

"We play a lot of teams with players who are physically bigger on average than our guys. But if we're playing our game and investing the effort many of our opponents simply can't keep up," he said. "The challenge for the coaching staff is to make sure the players remember to play to their strengths. We're blessed with some pretty intelligent and motivated players and the message gets through most of the time."

In the peewee A final, the Clippers took a 2-0 lead through one period and padded

their cushion to 3-0 after two.

Josh Burkholder and Evan Smith propelled the Clippers' attack with a pair of goals and one assist apiece. Chris Cadaret and Mitchell Smith rounded out the scoring with single tallies. Bob Lamirande, Rob Armstrong, Bill English and Matt Carrick each earned one assist. Cameron Nowikow played in goal and recorded the shutout.

To reach the final, the Clippers routed Scarborough 17-0, Oakridge 10-3 and Hespeler 3-2.

TO QUEBEC PEEWEE TOURNEY

Clippers' head coach Joe Lombardo wasn't surprised.

"Our team hasn't lost all year and we've been on a bit of a roll since September," he said of his club, which is 15-0-3 in Ontario Minor Hockey Association play and won the Richmond Hill Early Bird Tournament by going 4-0-1.

"Their work ethic and systems we've set with the kids. They follow our system and they're willing to learn."

The team will play in the prestigious Quebec Peewee International Tournament in February.

In the bantam final, Wellington blanked Innisfil 4-0. The minor bantam A division was cancelled.

The next Clipper tournament goes Jan. 2 to 4 for minor peewee AE, peewee AE, minor bantam AE, bantam AE and midget AE teams.

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