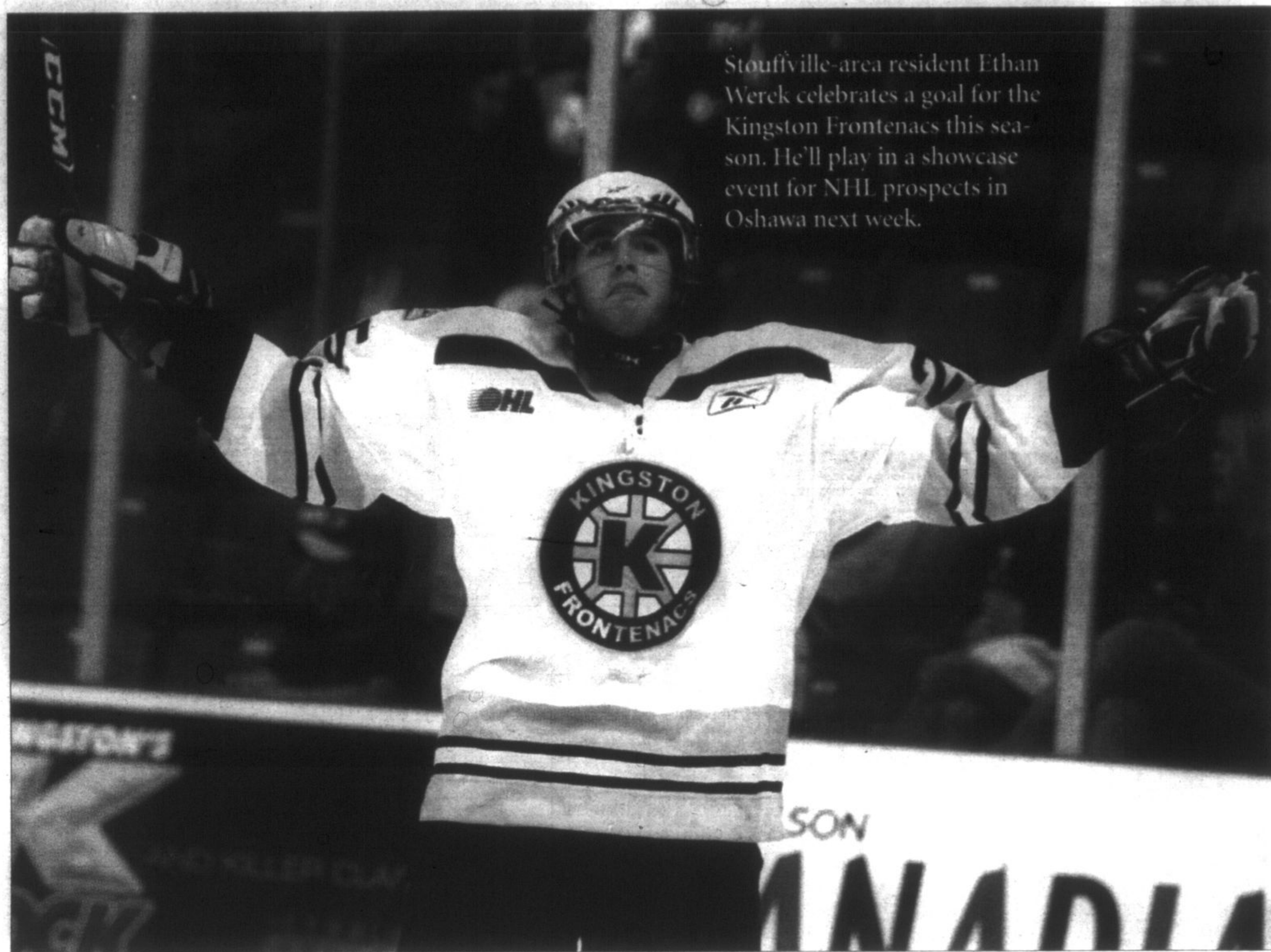


Stouffville Sun-Tribune

## SPORTS

Stouffville-area resident Ethan Werek celebrates a goal for the Kingston Frontenacs this season. He'll play in a showcase event for NHL prospects in Oshawa next week.



PHOTO/ICELEVEL

Stouffville product playing in Oshawa prospects showcase next week

## Werek hopes to be 1st-round NHL pick

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA  
Staff Writer

Just prior to taking a few days off from the Ontario Hockey League schedule for the Christmas holiday break, Kingston Frontenacs' forward Ethan Werek was summoned by team manager Larry Mavety.

The Goodwood native and Stouffville Spirit graduate wasn't on the receiving end of a tongue-lashing.

Rather, Werek received an unexpected, but pleasant surprise when Mavety informed the rookie forward he was chosen to be a participant in the 2009 Home Hardware CHL/NHL Top Prospects Game in Oshawa Jan. 13 and 14.

"To take part in the game was one of the last things on my mind since we are in the midst of our season," Werek said Monday from his Kingston residence. "It was a bit of a surprise to hear the news. But it certainly feels great."

As the top rookie scorer for the Frontenacs and fourth overall among first-year players in the OHL with 16 goals and 18 assists in 39 regular season games, Werek acknowledged one of his personal goals this year was to take part in the prospects game.

And with good reason as Werek will be eligible to be chosen in the 2009 NHL entry draft later this year.

"Hopefully, I can have a good game and show the scouts what I'm made of," he said.

Another goal is to be first-round NHL pick.

While the Frontenacs are mired in the East Division cellar, Werek harbours no regrets in deciding to take the OHL route rather than accept a full athletic scholarship to attend Boston University later this fall.

"Obviously, I gave up a great opportunity. But I'm excited in playing for the Frontenacs and in this league (OHL)," said Werek, who first played in the Whitchurch-Stouffville Minor Hockey Association.

In making the progression jump to playing in the OHL and as a rookie, Werek conceded he was forced to make some adjustments on and off the ice.

Living away from home for the first time, he's been forced to be more organized.

"Now, I have to remind myself to eat my vegetables," he said.

Like most first-year players, Werek said the game at the OHL level is far more up-tempo.

"It's definitely a faster game and the goaltending is good. You've got to take advantage of what scoring chances you have when you get them," he said.

Satisfied with his own personal performance, Werek hopes to parlay his performance in the second half of the schedule into more victories and a late-season push for the postseason.

"I feel that I'm having a good year and I can keep it up," he said. "But I hope we can play well enough to grab a playoff spot."

## Hamilton, Spirit clash this evening

**LAST WEEK:** Friday - lost 4-1 vs. Wellington Dukes. Four wins, one overtime win, three shootout wins, three shootout losses, 30 losses for 19 points. Last place in Central Division.

**COMING UP:** Tonight vs. Hamilton Red Wings, 7:30 p.m.; Sunday at Toronto Junior Canadiens, 7:30 p.m.; Monday at Cobourg Cougars, 7 p.m.

**GAME NOTES:** Spirit head coach Mark Joslin anticipated his club would be facing a sleeping giant when it travelled to Wellington Friday to face the Dukes. After all, his club had upended the Central Division's second-place Dukes in their last two meetings.

Sure enough, when the Spirit played the Dukes in their home arena, Wellington erupted with four unanswered goals in the second period and emerged with a 4-1 win. Don Maloney, who came off the injured list, accounted for the lone Spirit goal in the third period. The Spirit, who saw their two-game winning streak snapped, were outshot 59-27.

**INSIDER:** The Spirit played last Friday without the services of forwards Massimo Lamacchia, who was attending to personal matters, and Jason Heydon (knee sprain). Lamacchia is expected back for tonight's game against Hamilton. Heydon though, could be out for close to one week. Joslin had little time to dwell on the game as he quickly returned to Toronto to catch a flight to California to watch his nephew, Derek Joslin, make his National Hockey League debut as a member of the San Jose Sharks in their game against the New York Islanders.

Former Whitby Dunlops defenceman Don Sanderson, 21, who died Friday while in a coma after his head hit the ice in a Dec. 12 fight, auditioned last season with the Spirit. Ironically, the player with whom he fought was Brantford Blast forward Corey Fulton, who played for the Spirit last year.

**GENERALLY SPEAKING:** "No question, they (Wellington) were angry. Wellington is a great team and they had just lost four straight games. They're an incredible team at home and we had to weather the storm. Especially in the first period and we did after the first period was scoreless," Joslin said.

"But we kind of ran out of gas and it paid off for them. I thought we didn't play that bad. We were down 1-0 and Craig McDowell missed an open net and then we had a power play, but we committed a costly turnover and Wellington capitalized to make it 2-0 and then their crowd got into the game."

For live scoring and updates, go to [pointstreak.com](http://pointstreak.com)

For more on the Spirit, go to: [stouffvillespirit.com](http://stouffvillespirit.com)

- Mike Hayakawa

# TAX TIME - 2009

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