

Spirit looking for new coach again

Joslin leaves Stouffville for Toronto bantams

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA
Staff Writer

The Stouffville Spirit has hung out the help wanted sign again.

The Ontario Junior Hockey League club is searching for a new head coach. Mark Joslin stepped down Tuesday.

Joslin began last season with the dual role of general manager and associate coach before becoming head coach when Dave D'Amizzio was relieved of his duties and Ken Burrows returned to the club to serve as general manager.

FOUR COACHES, TWO YEARS

The new coach will be the fourth in two years in Spiritland. Dan West was fired in 2007 after leading the Spirit to two straight division finals and its only North and North-West titles.

After a 2 1/2-hour meeting, Burrows said Joslin's decision to leave was mutual.

"He (Joslin) had some things on the go," Burrows said of the Richmond Hill resident.

Joslin will serve as head coach next season with the North York Rangers AAA minor bantams.

"I wanted to go in a different direction and I have an opportunity to take a young program and build it to their draft year. I want to take kids to the next level," Joslin said. "It's a good opportunity for me financially and career-wise where I can develop young kids who are willing to learn. I feel I can make a difference. I'm excited with the new opportunity and I wish Stouffville and their organization the best."

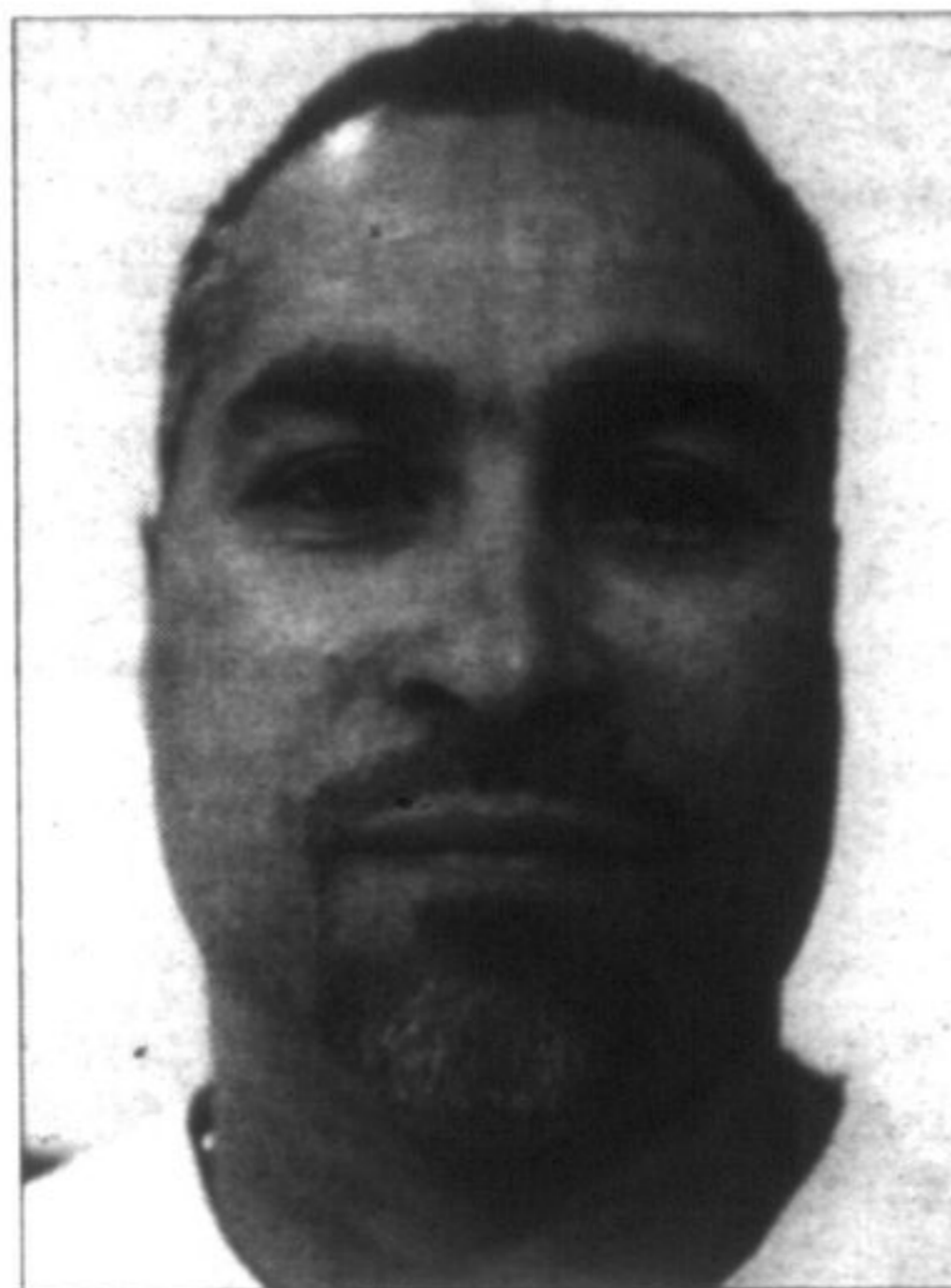
Although the Spirit finished in the cellar of the Central Division and were eliminated in four straight games by the first-place Wellington Dukes in the first round of the playoffs this past season, Burrows felt Joslin did a commendable job of coaching.

"With the situation the club was in, he helped us through some rough times. Especially with the large turnover of players that we had at the start of the year.

"But in the last 25 to 30 games when I was there (as Spirit general manager) he did a good job and our team improved," Burrows said of Joslin.

"Down the road Mark could be back here in another capacity," he said.

While it might be assumed the first task at hand will be to find a



MARK JOSLIN: GM turned coach leaves Stouffville Spirit Jr. A hockey team after one season.

successor to Joslin, Burrows has other matters to address first with club owners Zeev Werek and David Laren. Among those is to round out a front office staff.

"I'll be sitting down with Dave and Zeev in the next few days and we'll be putting some things together and go over some possibilities," Burrows said. "In a couple of weeks, we will have a clearer picture.

"We want to set things up properly and I'll be talking to a lot of people. Sure, it will take a lot of

work. But we will definitely be moving forward."

Joslin feels the pieces are in place for the Spirit to have a good season next year. Especially if goal-keeper Kori Coelho returns with 1991-born forwards Jason Heydon, Massimo Lamacchia and Matt Neal.

"We beat some good teams down the stretch and we lost 22 one-goal games, 19 during the regular season and three in the first round of the playoffs. If they can turn half of those losses into wins next year they'll be a good team," he said. "There's a great upside to this team."

ROOKIE CAMP SET

Burrows, who over the last couple of weeks has been actively beating the bushes looking for potential prospects for next season, concurred.

"The foundation is definitely in place," he said.

The Spirit will hold its annual spring rookie camp May 8 to 10 at the Stouffville Arena.

Burrows anticipated up to 12 spots could be open on the club's roster for next season.

For those interested in registering, go to the club's website at: stouffvillespirit.com

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