

Vacancies on blueline forced Stouffville GM's hand

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HOCKEY NIGHT

When the Stouffville Spirit started its main training camp last month, Ken Burrows had 50 to 60 1993-born players in attendance.

Since then, the Spirit general manager has had to pare the 16-year-olds down to a pair.

With the Central Canadian Hockey League regular season set to begin Thursday when the Spirit hosts the Markham Waxers, it has settled on its two, league-mandated 1993-born players. They are defencemen Ryan Zupancic and Brennan Serville.

"By the end of the year, they could be among our top five defencemen," he said. "They're both very mobile and good skaters."

Standing at five-feet, 11-inches and weighing close to 180 pounds,

► The Stouffville Spirit season in the new Central Canadian league opens Thursday in Stouffville. For more, go to stouffvillespirit.com

Zupancic played last season with the Mississauga Reps minor midgets and was a fifth-round pick of the Sarnia Sting in this year's Ontario Hockey League priority selection.

Serville, a six-foot, two-inch 170-pounder, was a member of the Ajax-Pickering Raiders minor midgets last year and an eighth-round selection of the Sudbury Wolves in this year's OHL draft.

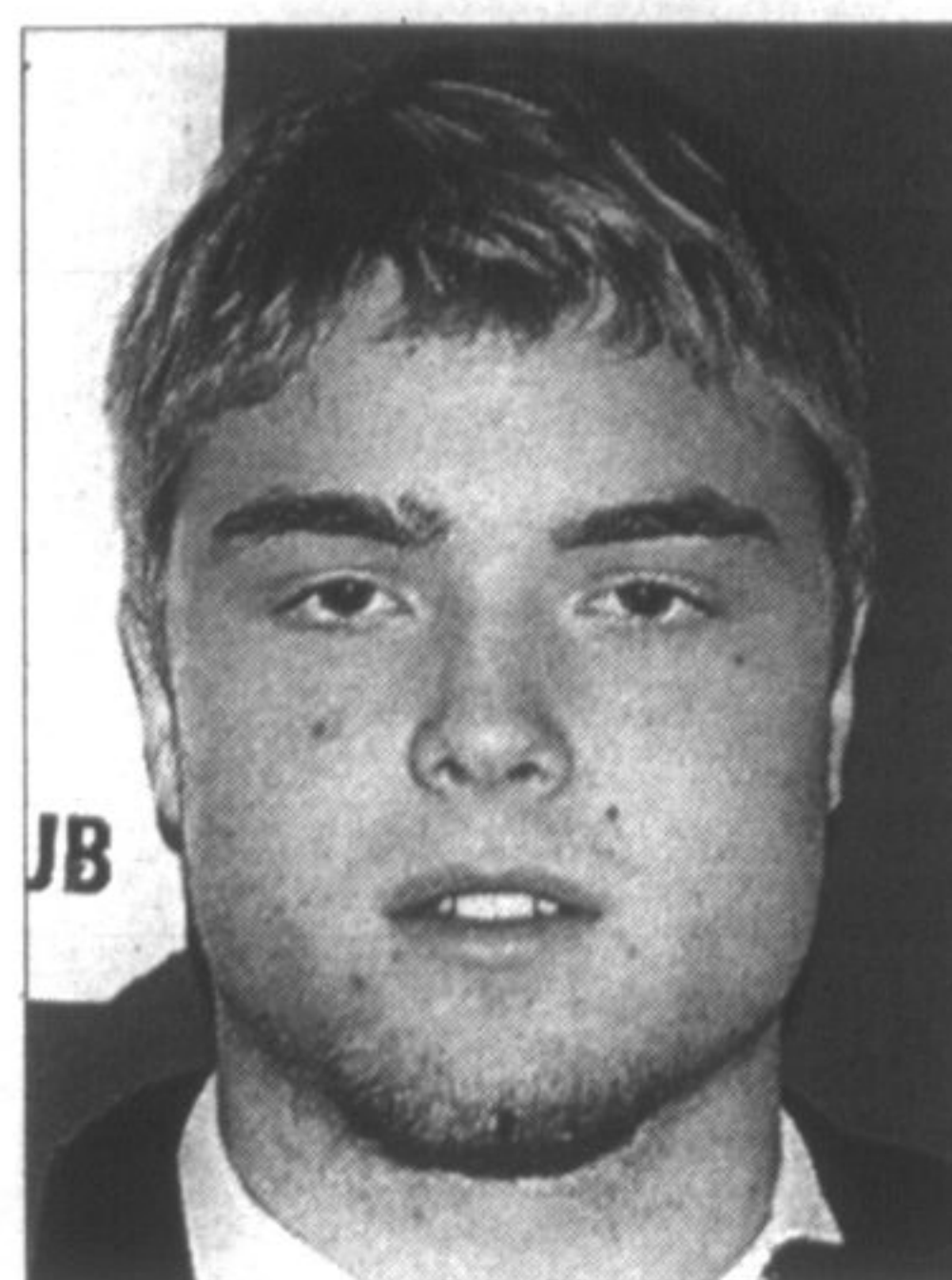
By league rules, the youngsters must play in 80 per cent of their

regular season games and cannot be healthy scratches.

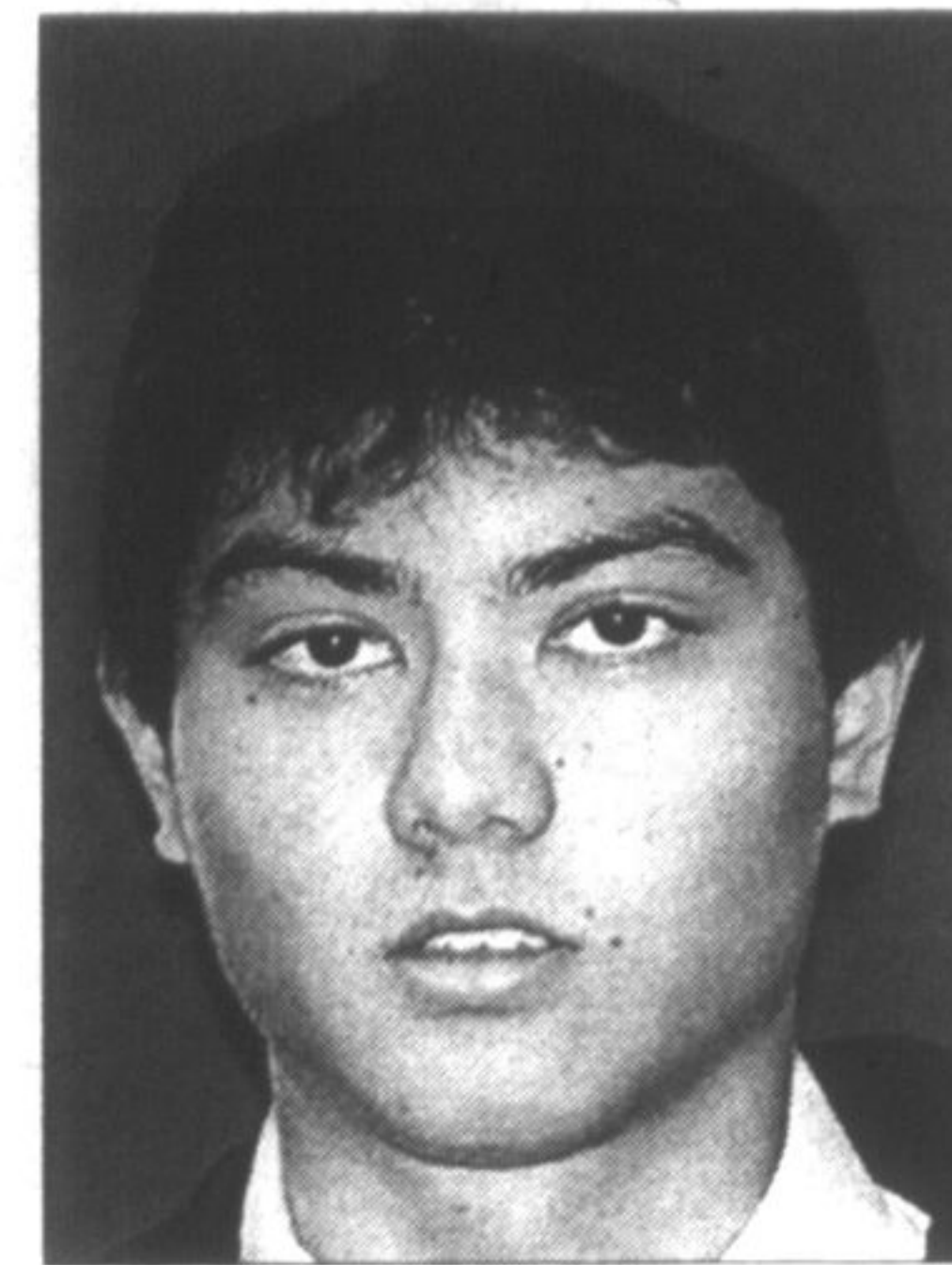
It was a challenging decision, especially with some young high-end forwards and a couple of candidates from the Whitchurch-Stouffville area in the mix, Burrows said.

It boiled down to position. "We knew going into the season on paper we were short on defence and looking at our forwards we knew we had a lot of good forwards," he said. "When we weighed things out, we felt we needed help on defence. Zupancic and Serville can play any time. We think we got two good ones."

For more on the Spirit, log on to: www.stouffvillespirit.com



RYAN ZUPANCIC: Fifth round pick of Sarnia Sting signs with Stouffville Spirit for 2009-10 season.



BRENNAN SERVILLE: Ajax-Pickering minor hockey graduate one of two 16-year-olds on roster.

Spirit wants more residents involved at rink, in schools this year: owner

When Steve Roest elected to invest his time and money into the Stouffville Spirit, his vision was to see it become a true community-based team.

By his definition, he wanted to see as many people as possible from the Whitchurch-Stouffville area become actively involved with the Central Canadian Hockey League team.

The new part-owner feels more commu-

nity involvement can serve as a catalyst to inspire the team on the ice.

With the Spirit set to embark on their regular season this Thursday, when they face the Markham Waxers at the Stouffville Arena, Roest said it's not too late to volunteer with the day-to-day and gameday operations.

SUGGESTIONS WELCOME

"To make (the Spirit) work is to get the community involved," the former Toronto Argonaut football player said. "We want to get their suggestions. If you work with them

you'll get their support.

"We want to make the Spirit a bigger part of the community, small-town hockey near the big city. We want to make it a win-win situation for everybody."

While Roest noted some of the regular volunteers will be returning to the fold, the club would like to build on that support base.

"There's always things for people to do," he said.

That includes accounting, public address announcing, scorekeeping, selling of game

tickets and 50-50 draw tickets.

The club could use school liaisons to help elementary students watch practices or in arranging for the Spirit players to visit their schools.

STUDENTS ATTEND PRACTICES

"The more people we can have to help will definitely create a winning situation," he said.

For more information, call 905-642-2123 or e-mail spirit@stouffvillespirit.com

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