

# No opening-night jitters for young Spirit defence

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If the Stouffville Spirit had concerns about their ability to play defence, they can put them to rest.

At least for one Central Canadian Hockey League contest.

Playing host to the Markham Waxers in their regular-season opener before some 300 onlookers at the Stouffville Arena Thursday, the Spirit put fourth a sound defensive effort and received timely offence to skate off with a 3-2 victory.

Second-year Spirit forward and Stouffville resident Justin Hulshof lit the red light with just 3:20 remaining in regulation time to deposit the game-winning tally.

Entering the opener, questions centered on young Spirit defence, which included their two 1993-born designated players in Bren-

nan Serville and Ryan Zupancic.

Not helping matters entering Thursday's game was the absence of veteran rearguard Chris Bain, who has requested a trade.

But in playing the new-look Waxers, who sported a new uniform design, the Spirit didn't appear to exhibit any ominous signs in their own end.

## DEMANDS TRADE

"The concern is that we are young on defence," Spirit general manager Ken Burrows said. "We dressed (two) defencemen in our lineup with junior A experience, but everyone else either played minor hockey or junior C. I don't think the consensus is that we're bad. We just have to learn to play at this (junior A) level and we (Spirit management) feel they can. It'll just take time."

Veteran goalkeeper Kori Coelho,

who played well on last year's Spirit club that occupied the cellar in the now defunct Provincial Junior A Hockey League's Central Conference, stopped 34 of 36 shots.

"That's why we could go with our young defence," Burrows said. "Kori will buy us some time while our young defencemen develop."

In Thursday's game, rookie forward Nathan Little staked the Spirit a 1-0 lead in the opening frame before Jack Caradonna tied it for the Waxers. Both tallies came on the power play.

Following a scoreless middle frame, the Waxers took their only lead on a goal by rookie forward Zack LaRue.

But another Stouffville product, rookie forward Shane Welker, tied the game at 2-2 at the 8:56-mark of the third period and set the stage for Hulshof's heroics, which didn't come without controversy.

The Waxers say their net was removed from its moorings before Hulshof's shot crossed the goal line.

But referees Jonathan Wallace and Joel Barron declared Hulshof's goal was good.

## GAME-WINNER CONTROVERSIAL

"The net was off (the moorings). The referees' mistake cost us a game and there's nothing we can do about it. What can you do?" said Waxers general manager and head coach Joe Cornacchia. "It was a missed call." Apart from the non-call, Cornacchia was quick to give full marks to the Spirit.

"They outworked us, especially down low and that's the deal. They beat us. It's as simple as that," the Vandorf resident said.

"I don't think we got many breaks in the first two periods," Burrows said. "One of their goals was acci-

dently tipped in by one of our players. I thought Markham had plenty of breaks. I just thought we worked a little harder than them. Especially in the third period.

"Overall I was really happy with the way the game was presented by our organization. Markham came to play and so did we."

After the Spirit and Waxers resumed their home-and-home series in Markham yesterday, the Spirit will play the St. Michael's Buzzers in Bowmanville Friday at 8 p.m. as part of the league's College Weekend. Next home game is Sept. 24 against Peterborough.

Spirited notes: Whitchurch-Stouffville Mayor Wayne Emmer-son dropped the puck to officially open the regular season Thursday.

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

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## Stouffville golfer's team sixth in province

James Castle was on a Cedar Brae Golf and Country Club squad that finished in a tie for sixth place in the Golf Association of Ontario's George S. Lyon Team Trophy at Rattle Snake Point Golf Club near Milton Tuesday.

The 22-year-old Stouffville resident, along with Robert Gibson, Richard Persaud and Tom Hodgins, finished 10-over par through 36 holes at 298.

Also finishing in sixth place was a Meadowbrook Golf and Country Club team of John Foster, 16, Carl Nanni, Mark Thompson and Raymond Oh. A Hamilton Golf and Country Club team won the event at one-over 289.

## Softball players giving back at tourney

The Whitchurch-Stouffville Softball Association will collect food from its players, officials and members of the public for the local food bank at its annual year-end tournament in Stouffville Memorial Park today.

You can make donations of non-perishable food from 9 a.m. on Diamond 2.



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