

Rookie saves day

in Spirited shootout in Spirited shootout

BY JIM MASON
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For a young goalie making his first start in junior hockey, Joseph Chemello was cucumber cool.

The Stouffville Spirit rookie stopped 34 of 36 shots the Peterborough Liftlock Stars fired at him through three periods and overtime at the Stouffville Arena Thursday. The 16-year-old picked up the win by stopping two of three Stars in the shootout.

It was the third win – all by 3-2 scores – for the Spirit in five Central Canadian Hockey League starts this season.

Chemello knew he would start after No. 1 goalie Kori Coelho received a four-game suspension courtesy of a spearing major during a loss Sunday in Burlington.

Was he nervous, filling in for the reigning team MVP?

“Naaaaa,” he said. “I’ve played in higher pressure situations than that. And knowing in advance I would play, and getting into the second half of Sunday’s game, helped me get my feet wet.”

The Grade 12 student at St. Augustine Catholic School in Unionville led the Toronto Titans to the GTHL major midget title last spring.

The Titans fought back from elimination to reach the provincial championship tourney and Chemello caught the attention of Spirit scouts.

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He had opportunities to go elsewhere.

“I liked the program, the coaches, the other players and the fact that it’s a community here,” he said. “They sold me on it.”

Undrafted in the Ontario Hockey League, Chemello hopes to play college hockey in the United States and then professionally in Italy.

Spirit head coach Craig Donovan confirmed Chemello’s performance between the pipes was instrumental in their win.

“We were fortunate to get the win. But Chemello played well. He made some saves and controlled his rebounds well. He was definitely one of the differences in the game,” Donovan said.

While happy to earn the two points with the win, Donovan still feels there’s room for improvement with his club. In particular, with their offence.

“We’re getting 30-plus shots a game, but only getting two to three goals. I think everyone is trying to make the perfect play instead of putting the puck on the net and having

someone go hard to the net,” he said.

In an effort to bolster their offensive attack, Donovan hinted he might shuffle his forward units.

Chris Porter and Greg Whittle had the Spirit goals. Whittle and Alex Derlis scored on both Spirit shots in the shootout.

The Spirit plays at Ajax Sunday afternoon and hosts Bowmanville Thursday.

NOTEBOOK: It was the first time ever the Spirit and Peterborough played. The Spirit and Bowmanville clashed regularly in the late 1990s ... volunteer Dave Beauchamp is back with the Spirit after several years with the Newmarket Hurricanes and Aurora Tigers ... Chris Seiler, called up from the Uxbridge Bruins Jr. C team to back up Chemello, needed stitches after taking a shot off his chin during the pre-game. Ditto for veteran referee Rob Palm, who was headed to hospital in Uxbridge after the game to get his chin sewn up. He missed part of the game while receiving medical attention.

– with files from
Michael Hayakawa

GET A GRIP



STAFF PHOTO/MIKE BARRETT

Stouffville Secondary’s Joey Hillier is brought down by Newmarket Denison players Alex Watson and Zach Marcelline during Stouffville’s 20-7 win in York Region high school rugby action in Stouffville Wednesday. For high school results and schedules, go yraa.com

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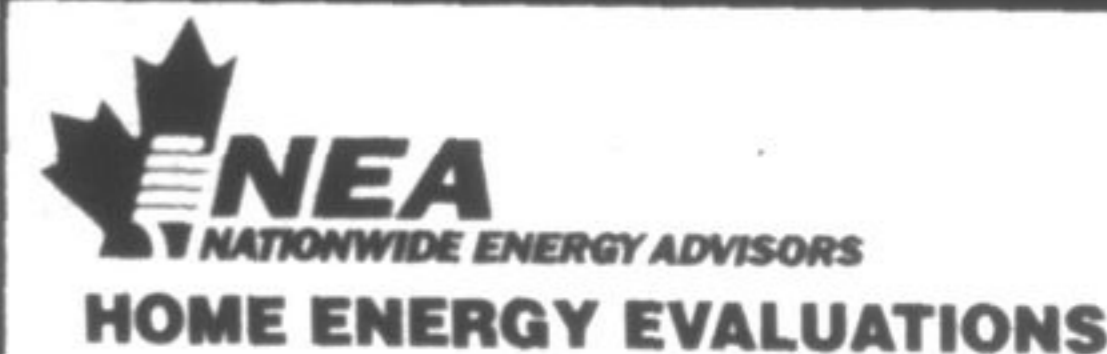
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