

JR. A NOTEBOOK: Pickering Panthers in Stouffville tonight

# Spirit head coach big fan of shootouts this season

**LAST WEEK:** Saturday: Stouffville Spirit 3 vs. Wellington Dukes 2 (shootout). Spirit record: 18 wins, four shootout wins, one overtime win, 17 losses, one overtime loss, one shootout loss, 48 points. Fourth place in East Division.

**COMING UP:** Thursday: Pickering Panthers at Stouffville, 7:30 p.m. Friday: Stouffville at Lindsay Muskies, 7:30 p.m. Sunday: Seguin Bruins at Stouffville, 2:30 p.m.

**GAME NOTES:** When the Stouffville Spirit were forced into a shootout during their Central Canadian Hockey League contest against the East Division-leading Wellington Dukes last Saturday, head coach Craig

Donovan felt it played right into their hands. The Spirit had won three of four shootouts this year, the first-year head said. They made it 4-for-5 with a 3-2 triumph. Of those four shootout victories, two were against the Dukes, both at the Stouffville Arena.

In Saturday's tilt, Spirit netminder Kori Coelho stoned the Dukes during the shootout as he stopped Joe Zarbo, Jeremy Franklin and Adam Zamec. After the Spirit's first shooter Greg Whittle was foiled, Alex Derlis made good on his attempt to give Stouffville the win and extra point. During regulation play, the Dukes took a 1-0 lead after one period. The Spirit evened the count just before the midway point of

the second period on a power-play goal by Declan Gunovski. But with just 26 seconds remaining in the period, the Dukes took advantage of a power-play opportunity and scored to regain the upper hand. The Spirit forced overtime when Andrew Doyle scored to tie the game with just 64 seconds remaining in the third period. The Spirit out-shot the Dukes 33-28.

**INSIDER:** The victory by the Spirit, combined with the Cobourg Cougars' 6-3 loss to Ajax Sunday, assured Stouffville of a berth in next month's playoffs.

Forward Jason Heydon, who has been out with a shoulder injury since Nov. 5, has

been cleared to return to the lineup.

The Spirit filled their final player card Tuesday by adding forward Kurtis Hulshof. The younger brother of Spirit forward Justin Hulshof, the 18-year-old Stouffville resident played with the Spirit at the start of last season and had two assists in 13 games. He played part of this season with the Markham Waxers and had one goal in three games before he was released.

**GENERALLY SPEAKING:** "I definitely feel we have an advantage whenever we get into a shootout," Donovan said. "Not only do we have a good goalkeeper in Kori (Coelho), but our shooting percentage on breakaways

is close to .500 per cent. Normally goalies save around 70 per cent of breakaway attempts on the whole. If we're shooting at a .500 clip and on a whole, the average for guys scoring on breakaways is at around .200 to .300, I feel we should win most of the time in shootouts," he said.



Donovan said his club cannot afford to rest. "Sure we're happy to be in the playoffs," he said. "But our goal is to have home ice at least in the first round. Right now we can finish as high as third or as low as eighth. That's how close the teams are in our division."

- Michael Hayakawa

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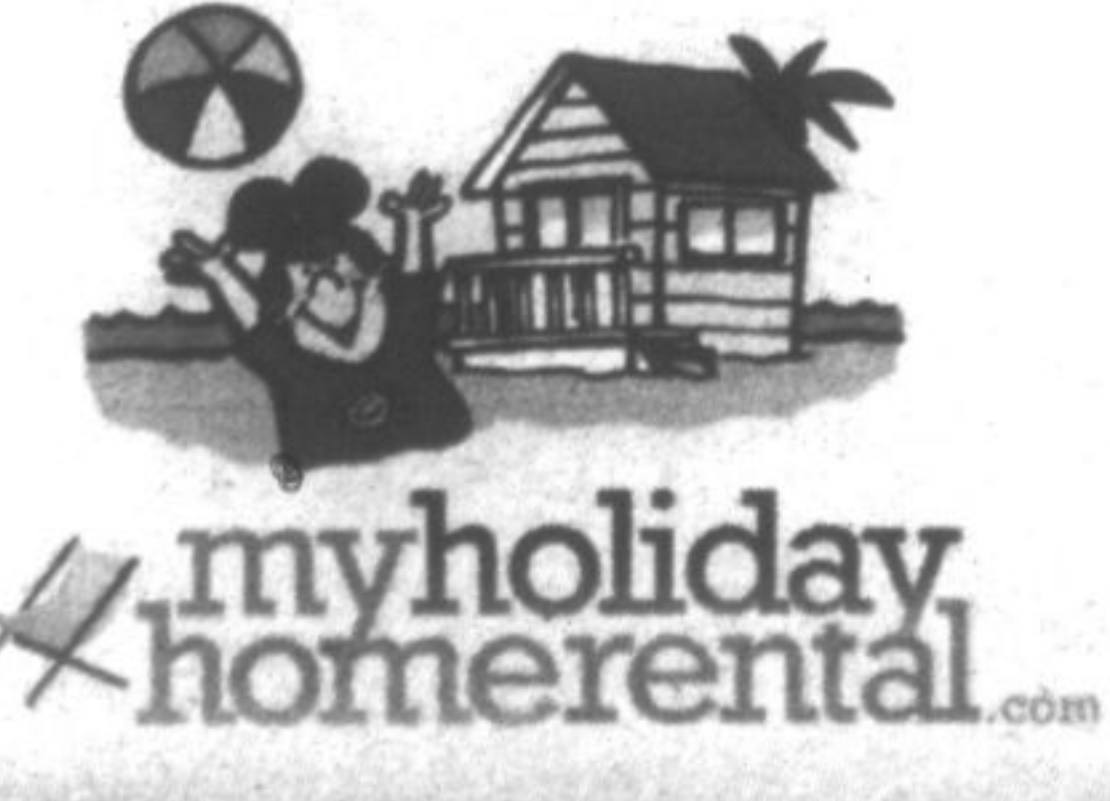
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