

JR. A HOCKEY NOTEBOOK: .Play in Orangeville tonight

# Weekend sweep has Spirit back in third place

**LAST WEEK:** Friday: Stouffville Spirit 4 vs. Markham Waxers 3. Sunday: Stouffville 6 vs. Collingwood Blackhawks 1. Spirit record: 17 wins, one overtime win, one shootout win, 10 losses, two shootout losses, three overtime losses, 43 points. Tied for third place with Huntsville Otters in North Division, Ontario Junior Hockey League.

**COMING UP:** Today: Spirit at Orangeville, 7:30 p.m.

**GAME NOTES:** Entering Sunday's tilt against the visiting and North Division cellar-dwelling Collingwood Blackhawks at the Stouffville Arena, Stouffville head coach Craig Donovan was concerned his club might play to the level of their opponents. During the season, Donovan felt there were times when his charges were guilty of that tendency. But not so this time around as the Spirit defence limited Collingwood shooters to just eight shots the entire game and cruised to a 6-1 win. Unanswered goals by Brennan Serville, Jack Caradonna and Chris Porter on the power play staked the Spirit to a 3-0 lead after 20 minutes. In the second period, Declan Gunovski scored to pad the Spirit's lead to 4-0 before the Blackhawks countered with their lone tally of the game on the power play. Matt Neal scored twice in the third period to round out the scoring. The Spirit outshot Collingwood 50-8. If not for Collingwood goalie Jon Hall and five dinged goal posts, the score could have been much higher.

The win by the Spirit came on the heels of a hard-fought 4-3 road win over the second-place Markham Waxers Friday. Kory Kennedy scored the lone goal of the first period to stake the Spirit to a 1-0 lead after 20 minutes. The Spirit then took advantage of an early power-play opportunity when Tyler von Engelbrechen lit the red light to give Stouffville a 2-0 lead. But that goal was offset when the Waxers responded with a goal just a few minutes later to cut the Spirit's lead to 2-1 through 40 minutes. In the third period, both

clubs exchanged two goals apiece as Spirit rookie forward Rob Acton got things started to restore the Spirit's two-goal margin. After the Waxers countered with a goal just 18 seconds later that cut their deficit to 3-2, the Spirit got one back when Billy Lovatsis was awarded a penalty shot and made the most of his opportunity to vault the Spirit back to a 4-2 advantage. Just 61 seconds later, the Waxers scored to get back to within a goal. But that would be as close as they would get before the final buzzer sounded. The Spirit outshot the Waxers 35-25.

**INSIDER:** Former Spirit netminder Dalton McGrath has been solid since joining the Niagara IceDogs of the Ontario Hockey League. With Niagara's regular netminder, Mark Visentin, playing for the Canadian junior national team, McGrath is 3-0 with a 1.88 goals against average and a .938 save percentage. During last Friday's 10-0 win over the Barrie Colts, McGrath played 40 minutes and shared the shutout with Michael Gallardi. The following night, McGrath played in goal during Niagara's 5-2 win over Owen Sound. He's not expected back in Spiritland.

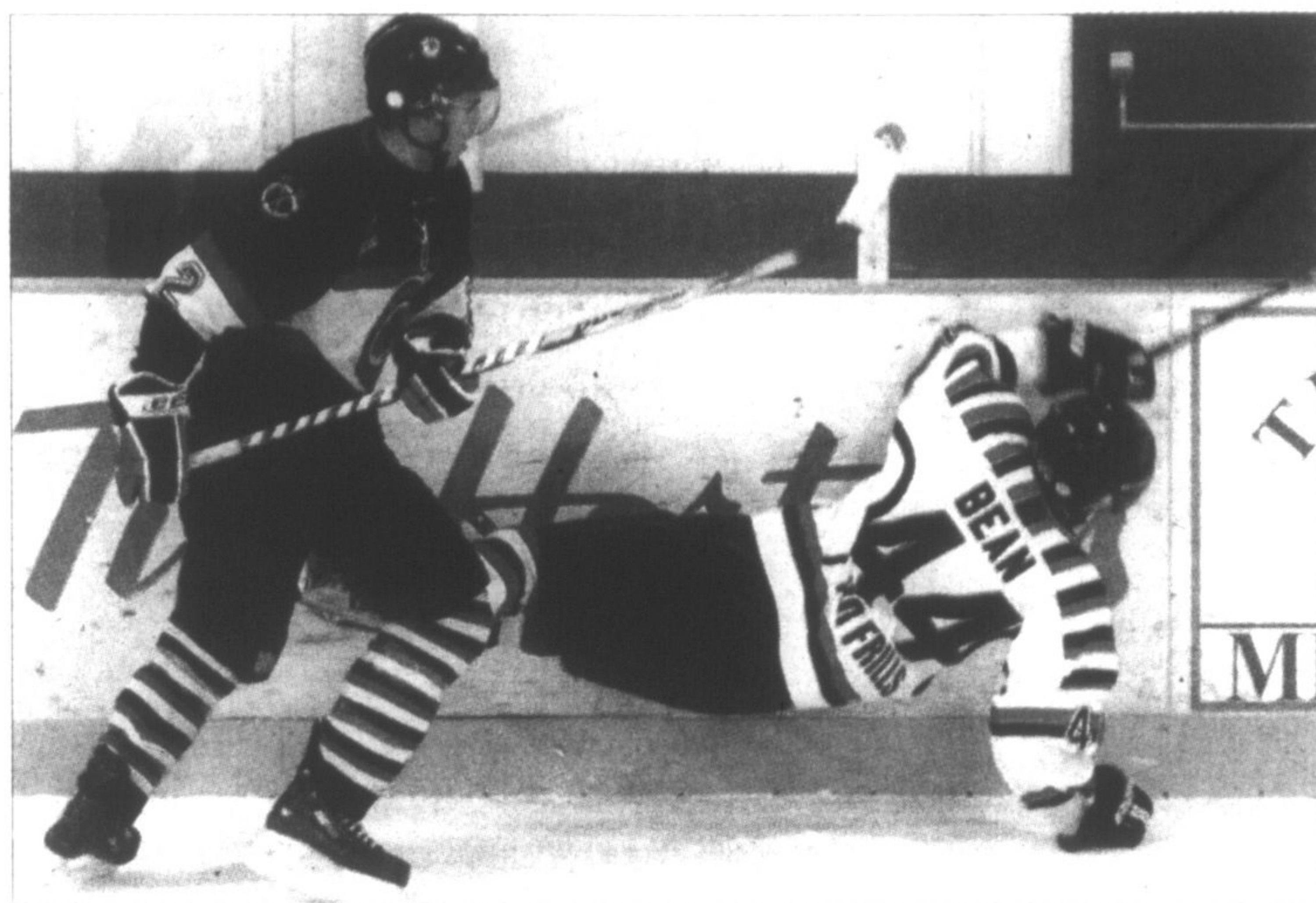
Spirit defenceman Blake Stephenson made his return to action during Sunday's game against Collingwood.

Spirit grad Will Acton, Rob's big brother, took in the weekend games while home from his team at Lake Superior State in Michigan.

**GENERALLY SPEAKING:** "We talked about not playing to the level of our competition and on Sunday we were more aggressive at both ends of the ice," Donovan said of Sunday's win.

Reflecting on the club's two victories, Donovan attributed a large part of their success to playing better defence. Especially in their own zone.

"We didn't play well Thursday (a 9-6 loss to the Aurora Tigers) and we didn't get saves from our goaltend-



STAFF PHOTO/NICK IWANYSHYN

Collingwood Blackhawk Chris Reid takes down Stouffville's Jordan Bean during the Spirit's 6-1 win at the Stouffville Arena Sunday. For additional photographs, go to [yorkregion.com](http://yorkregion.com)

ing. (Our coaching staff) didn't have to say much (after Thursday's game) But we rebounded well defensively Friday and Sunday."

Donovan also felt part of their success in Friday's win over Markham stemmed from the natural rivalry that exists between the two clubs.

"It was easy for us to get up against Markham since

several of our players live there," he said. "But I also thought we forechecked them exceptionally well in the neutral zone. Markham scores a lot off the rush and I thought we slowed them down. They have a lot of skilled forwards."

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

— Michael Hayakawa

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