

GM no fan of format

BY MICHAEL HAYAKAWA
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Stouffville Spirit co-owner and general manager Ken Burrows isn't a fan of the Ontario Junior Hockey League playoffs that open next week. Too much cross-over between divisions for him.

"I was very disappointed there wasn't going to be a North, South, East and West Division winner," he said. "I don't like the format."

Developed prior to the start of the season by a league competition committee, the postseason will see the league's four divisions split into two conferences: the North, which the Spirit are a part of, and West Divisions will play as the North-West Conference. The South and East Divisions will play as the South-East Conference.

The top three teams in each division - including the second or third-place Spirit - will earn a first-round bye. That second round will be played between Feb. 19 and March 4.

Two finalists will eventually play in the best-of-seven OJHL championship series from April 2 to 16.

JR. A NOTEBOOK: High-scoring Neal player of month

Spirit not playing out pre-playoff string

LAST WEEK: Friday: Stouffville Spirit 6 vs. Aurora Tigers 3. Saturday: Georgetown Raiders 3 vs. Spirit 1. Spirit record: 27 wins, two overtime wins, two shootout wins, 11 losses, three shootout loss, three overtime losses, 68 points. Third place in North Division, Ontario Junior Hockey League.

COMING UP: Friday: Spirit at Huntsville Otters, 7:30 p.m. Sunday: Newmarket Hurricanes vs. Stouffville Spirit at Stouffville Arena, 2:10 p.m. WhiStle Radio.

GAME NOTES: In looking at the final score it might be assumed Stouffville Spirit head coach Craig Donovan would be disappointed after his club came out on the short end of a 3-1 decision against the host Georgetown Raiders Saturday. Sure, it would have been nice to skate off with two points and extend their winning streak that was ultimately snapped at five games. But Donovan felt his players gave

a good account of themselves. Preventing the Spirit from at least coming away with one point was the work of Raiders' goalie Michael Stiliadis, who stopped 32 of 33 shots. Not to mention he had a little luck on his side as the Spirit shooters struck four or five goal posts during the contest that might have tipped the scales in their favour. Tyler von Engelbrechten scored the lone goal for the Spirit in the opening period after they trailed 2-0. After a scoreless second period, the Raiders added an insurance marker on a breakaway late in the third period. The Raiders, who won the home-and-away season series over the Spirit, directed 24 shots on Spirit goalie Jon Hall.

The loss by the Spirit came on the heels of a 6-3 road win over the Aurora Tigers on Rogers TV Friday. The Spirit jumped out to a 3-0 lead in the opening period on a power-play goal from Matt Neal and even-strength tallies from Christian Finch and Jordan Bean. After the Tigers scored before the period concluded to cut their deficit, the Spirit regained their three-goal margin just past the midway point of the second period on a goal from Kory Kennedy. But the Tigers responded with two goals of their own before the period concluded to get back to within one. That would be as close as the Tigers would get as von Engelbrechten and Chris Porter scored to secure the win for the Spirit. The Spirit outshot the Tigers 51-27.

INSIDER: The Spirit's fine play of late did not go unnoticed by the OJHL, who named Neal as their player of the month for January. In the OJHL scoring race, Neal holds down fourth place with 38 goals and 57 assists for 95 points while Finch is in a tie for seventh place with 28 goals and 51 assists for 79 points.

GENERALLY SPEAKING: "I thought we played a solid game. Georgetown's goalie played the game of his life," Donovan said. "In the second period alone he made some really high-end saves. And we hit at least four solid posts. We got the shots that we wanted, but ran into a hot goalie or hit posts. Right now I'm happy with where our game is now."

"With the playoffs just around the corner, what we have to do is to try and strive for consistency for an entire game. That's what we've been building on."

Reflecting on their win over the Tigers Friday, Donovan felt his club was well deserving of the two points and the margin of victory could have been more were it not for the goaltending of Knick Dawe.

With two regular season games to play on their schedule against two formidable opponents in the Huntsville Otters Friday and the North Division-leading Newmarket Hurricanes Sunday, Donovan feels it will provide a stern challenge for his club as they still have an opportunity to claim second place in the North Division.

"I'd rather play playoff teams down the stretch because they are playing at the same level as us and we won't get into any bad habits," Donovan said. "Playing at Huntsville is a long drive and Huntsville plays well in their own rink and it's a tough environment to go into."

"To play the first-place team in Newmarket and who we haven't played in a while it will be good to see where we stand."

Michael Hayakawa

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5-Pitch Novice (2005-2006)		\$90	\$100
5-Pitch Advanced (2003-2004)		\$90	\$100
Mites (2001-2002)		\$90	\$100
Squirts (1999-2000)		\$95	\$105
Pee Wee/Novice (1997-1998)		\$105	\$115
Bantams (1995-1996)		\$105	\$115
Midgets (1992-1993-1994)		\$105	\$115
*Family Rate (minimum 3)		\$250	\$275

REGISTRATION INFO
LOCATION: 9th Line Arena, Stouffville
TIME: 9:30am - 1:00pm
DATES: Feb 12th, Feb 19th, March 5th, March 12th, March 19th

SELECT SOFTBALL INFORMATION: Currently there are teams planned for the Mite & Squirt Boy Divisions. More information will be available at the registration desk.

Softball in 2011 is available for all children born in the years 1992-2006 (players born in 1991 may request special permission to play). If you have any other questions regarding registration, please reply to this e-mail address or call 905-667-0655

REP SOFTBALL TRYOUT SCHEDULE: Please note that some tryouts may have a cost associated with them

TEAM	COACH	DATE	TIME	LOCATION
JUNIOR MITES* (2003-2004) *\$20 fee to tryout for the Jr Mites Rep Team	George Karanopolous	February 10	6:00pm to 7:00pm	Harry Bowes Public School
	647-242-9055	February 17	6:00pm to 7:00pm	(90 Greenwood Rd, Stouffville)
	stormfastball@gmail.com	February 24	6:00pm to 7:00pm	
MITES (2001-2002)	Dale Wannamaker	February 17 & 24	6:00pm to 7:10pm	Stouffville District Secondary School (801 Hoover Park Drive, Stouffville)
	905-642-9207 stormfastball@gmail.com	March 3 & 10	6:00pm to 7:10pm	
SQUIRTS (1999-2000)	Terry Eizenga	February 3 & 10	6:00pm to 7:10pm	Stouffville District Secondary School (801 Hoover Park Drive, Stouffville)
	905-642-1982 stormfastball@gmail.com	March 3 & 10	6:00pm to 7:10pm	
PEEWEE (1997-1998)	Kelly Matthews	Every Thursday beginning January 27th, 2011	6:15pm to 7:45pm	Stouffville District Secondary School (801 Hoover Park Drive, Stouffville)
	905-642-0439 stormpeeewee@gmail.com			

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