

# Spirit expects tougher rematch

BY JOHN CUDMORE  
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Clunk.

That would be the sound of the Newmarket Hurricanes hitting the floor in an 8-2 loss in the opening game of a best-of-seven Ontario Junior Hockey League quarter-final series Thursday night at the Ray Twinney Complex in Newmarket.

To the Stouffville Spirit, it couldn't be a sweeter sound. For the Hurricanes, it signifies a need to regain their feet and clear the cobwebs after absorbing a shot directly on the chin.

Fuelled by four-point games from Matt Neal, Paul Geiger and Brennan Serville, the Spirit applied a full-out beat down on the Hurricanes to gain the upper hand in the series going to Game 2 Sunday afternoon in Stouffville. Game time is 2:10 p.m.

"We don't judge a series by one game," said Spirit head coach Craig Donovan, recalling a 6-2 loss his team suffered in an opening round series against the Markham Waxers, before rallying to win in six games. "We came back and were dominant in that series. I look at Newmarket's entire body of work over the course of the season.

"It's a good start, but Markham probably felt the same way."

The Spirit, which scored four powerplay goals in the rout, wasted little time in issuing a statement, chasing Hurricanes starting netminder Jimmy Sarjeant with three goals on seven shots less than 15 minutes into the game.

"We definitely played our worst game of the year," said Sarjeant. "It was just one of those nights we didn't have it.

"I'm disappointed and not happy about it and I'm sure the rest of the guys won't be too happy either. In

the playoffs, we're expected to step our game up and it looked like we took a step back.

"We need to play with a lot more energy. We came out flat and the bounces weren't going our way, but the bounces usually go to the team working harder.

The defeat was the most lopsided of the season for Newmarket which lost only three times on home ice.

"It's still two evenly matched teams," said Donovan, whose team was outshot 14-8 in the opening period. "We'll take it but the series is by no means over.

"In the first period, I thought we were fortunate to be up 4-1 because we made a lot of giveaways in our end. We're going to have to be a lot tighter."

To be sure, the Spirit caught the Hurricanes flat-footed and in an unfamiliar situation.

"I don't know that they're used to battling back from three and four goals down," said Donovan. "That's when they had to start taking chances and that's good for us."

Neal and Geiger both had two goals for the Spirit. Singles by Drake Caggiula, Declan Gunovski, Kory Kennedy and Serville rounded out the assault.

Chris Brown and Tyler Sikura notched the Newmarket goals.

## Newmarket Hurricanes (1) vs. Stouffville Spirit (5)

(Best-of-7)

Game 1 - Stouffville 8, Newmarket 2 ... Game 2 - Sun. March 6 at Stouffville, 2:10 p.m. ... Game 3 - Tue. March 8 at Newmarket, Ray Twinney Complex, 7:35 p.m. ... Game 4 - Thur. March 10 at Stouffville, 7:30 p.m. ... Game 5 - Sun. March 13 at Newmarket, RTC, 4:30 p.m. ... Game 6 - Tue. March 15 at Stouffville, 7:30 p.m. ... Game 7 - Thur. March 17 at Newmarket, RTC, 8 p.m.  
Spirit leads series, 1-0.



STAFF PHOTO/NICK IWANYSHYN

Newmarket Hurricane Matt Dineen trips up Stouffville Spirit forward Justin MacDonald during Jr. A playoff action at the Ray Twinney Complex Thursday. Stouffville won 8-2 to open the third-round series.

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