

JR. A NOTEBOOK: Busy Thanksgiving schedule begins tonight

# First-place Spirit cracks national top 20

**LAST WEEK:** Saturday: Aurora Tigers 3 vs. Stouffville Spirit 2 (overtime). Sunday: Spirit 4 vs. Huntsville Otters 3. Spirit record: five wins, one overtime win, one loss, one overtime loss, 13 points, tied for first place in North Division.

**COMING UP:** Today: at Newmarket Hurricanes, 7:30 p.m. Friday: at Markham Waxers, 7:30 p.m. Monday: vs. Markham Waxers at Stouffville Arena, 2:30 p.m.

**GAME NOTES:** The Stouffville Spirit looked like two distinctly different teams when it took to the ice for a pair of Ontario Junior Hockey League contests last weekend.

Playing in Aurora Saturday, the Spirit got off to a less-than-impressive start as the Tigers scored a pair of unanswered goals to take a 2-0 lead through 20 minutes. That appeared to send a wakeup call to the Spirit, who rebounded in the second period with goals from ex-Collingwood Blackhawk Thomas Tsicos and Christian Finch, on a power play, near the midway point to tie the game at 2-2.

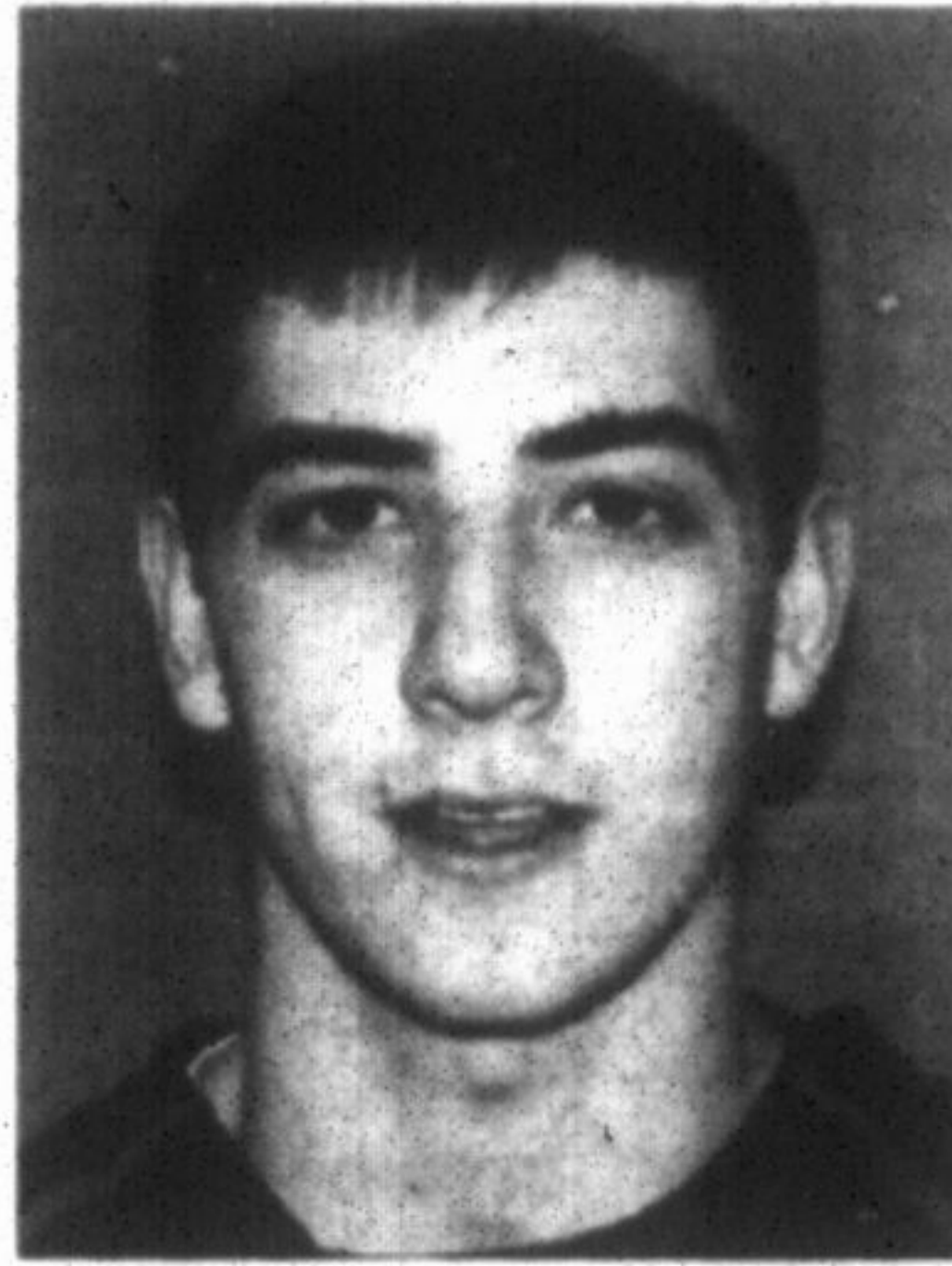
After a scoreless third period, the contest went into a five-minute sudden death overtime session when Nick Angelo scored at the 3:40 mark to give the Tigers the extra point. The Tigers outshot the Spirit 46-39.

That setback seemed to send a message to the Spirit when they hosted the Hunts-

ville Otters the following day. Exhibiting far more jump in their game, the Spirit took a 1-0 lead after 20 minutes on a power-play goal by Tsicos. After the Otters scored to tie the game early in the second period, the Spirit regained the upper hand just past the midway point on a goal by Chris Porter to take a 2-1 lead into the dressing room. The Spirit had a golden opportunity to pad their advantage early in the third period when rookie forward Leonard Dziemianko was awarded a penalty shot after being hooked on a breakaway by Otters' defence man Cooper Rush. Unfortunately for Dziemianko, his scoring attempt failed.

Despite that bit of adversity, the Spirit took advantage of two power-play opportunities when Finch and Tsicos each scored to give the Spirit a 4-1 lead. But the Otters took advantage of a couple of calls against the Spirit to score a pair of late power-play markers and cut their deficit to 4-3 before regulation time expired. The Spirit outshot the Otters 38-24.

**INSIDER:** Forward Darcy Meyer, 20, saw his first action with the Spirit Saturday after being on the shelf for most of the preseason and early portion of the regular season schedule after incurring a torn muscle in his leg during the club's first preseason game. The six-foot, 170-pound Fredericton, N.B., native played with the



**THOMAS TSICOS:** Former Collingwood Blackhawk has huge weekend for Stouffville Spirit.

Upper Canada Patriots last year and had nine goals and 11 assists in 37 regular season games.

For the first time in some six years, the Spirit received recognition in the Canadian Junior Hockey League's weekly top 20 list as they were listed 19th in the Oct. 3 rankings.

On the injury front, the Spirit saw the return of rookie forward Robert Rawlins in

Sunday's game against the Otters. Rookie defenceman Matt Heffernan is expected back on the ice this week in practices after he incurred an ankle injury during the preseason.

When the Otters scored in the second period it marked just the second time this season the Spirit have surrendered a goal during that stanza. In both instances it came against the Otters. In surrendering two power-play goals against the Otters, it snapped a three-game streak in which the Spirit did not allow a power-play goal.

**GENERALLY SPEAKING:** "We were two completely different teams on the weekend," said Spirit head coach Craig Donovan on his club's two tilts. "On Saturday we seemed disinterested, Aurora won all of the battles in the first period. It was as bad as we could have played. In the second period we played harder and in the third period it was good hockey by both teams. The overtime goal was a defensive breakdown on a one-on-two rush.

"On Sunday, we played with more energy, everybody knew they were disappointed from Saturday's game."

While happy with how his team was able to rebound after Saturday's disheartening loss, Donovan was quick to sing the praises of several individuals.

Most notably Tsicos, who had three goals in the two games.

"Tommy played really well. He's a strong kid and can knock guys off the puck. He doesn't get any pretty goals, but he just goes hard to the net and bangs home the rebounds."

As for seeing the Spirit enter the top 20 CJHL poll, Donovan was pleased with the recognition. The key, he said, is to remain in that elite group.

"We want to stay there (in the top 20 poll). To do that we've got to beat the top teams," he said.

Looking ahead to his club's next three games, Donovan feels it will provide a litmus test, especially tonight's game against the Hurricanes. Both teams have 13 points to sit atop the North Division.

The following two games against the Markham Waxers, including the traditional Thanksgiving Monday matinee in Stouffville, will also be interesting since the Spirit eliminated them from the playoffs last season.

"The next three games will be important," he said.

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

- Michael Hayakawa

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 (905) 640-2561  
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 Thursday Prayer - 7:30 p.m.  
 "Why Israel?" DVD series Oct. 6-Nov. 24

[www.stouffvillechristianchurch.ca](http://www.stouffvillechristianchurch.ca)

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 Stouffville Rd. at Kennedy Rd.  
 905-887-5651

[www.springvale.org](http://www.springvale.org)

Senior Pastor: Ed Fontaine  
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**Sunday, Oct. 9, 2011**  
 9:45 am  
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 Ed Fontaine

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 Wheelchair accessible

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 10 a.m.

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 7 p.m.

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 905.640.5696

**Sunday Service @ 10 am**  
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 Youth Pastor: Ian Harley  
 Counselor: Bonnie Borchardt  
[www.spcfamilly.ca](http://www.spcfamilly.ca)

Jr. High - Tuesday's  
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 Kids Club - Wednesday's  
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 Sr. Youth - Friday's  
 Grades 9-12 @ 7:00 pm

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 13660 Ninth Line N.  
 (905) 642-4414  
 Rev. Peter Pallant

**Sunday, Oct. 9, 2011**  
 9:30am - Sunday School  
 11:00am - Church Service  
 6:30pm - Evening Service  
**Everyone Welcome!**

**Stouffville United Church**  
Building Faith, Family and Community  
 Rev. Nancy Waterman

34 Church St. N. 905-640-TT63  
[info@stouffvilleuc.ca](mailto:info@stouffvilleuc.ca)

**Sunday Oct. 9**  
 Worship Service  
 10:30am  
 Thanksgiving  
 Sunday

[www.stouffvilleuc.ca](http://www.stouffvilleuc.ca)

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Until our facility is ready, our Sunday morning services will take place at the old community hall at:

14663 Woodbine Ave, VANDORF (1.7km South of Aurora Rd. on Woodbine)

Services are held every Sunday morning at 10:30am, including Sunday School for children ages 5-12 and Toddlers & Twos. No Evening Service this week, due to the long weekend.

For more information, visit [www.lwff.net](http://www.lwff.net) or contact us at (905) 895-9991.

**Happy Thanksgiving**

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