

Stouffville Sun-Tribune

SPORTS

Northern teams awaiting winner of Spirit, Fury series

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The Stouffville Spirit would like nothing more than to capture their Ontario Junior Hockey League best-of-seven final series against the Whitby Fury in front of their unwavering followers at the Stouffville Arena.

With the series deadlocked at two games apiece entering yesterday's fifth game at the Stouffville Arena, the Spirit could still hoist the Buckland Trophy on home ice.

(Whitby won 3-2 Tuesday, following a 2-1 Spirit victory at home Sunday.)

But ideally, they would like to rain on the parade of the Fury by wrapping up the series after Friday's sixth game at Iroquois Park Arena in Whitby to start at 7:30 p.m.

To face a seventh game, which would return to Stouffville Arena Saturday at 7:30 p.m., could be like playing with fire.

Having been extended to a deciding seventh game in their last two playoff rounds against the Georgetown Raiders in the North-West finals and Newmarket Hurricanes in the North Division final, and with both tilts played on the road, the Spirit know anything can happen in a one-game, winner-take-all showdown.

"It would be nice to win the title in front of our home fans, but I certainly don't want to have a Game 7," said Spirit captain Andrew Doyle. "Anything could happen in a seventh game."

"A goalie can steal a game or you could get bad bounces," added Spirit defenceman Paul Geiger. "So far, each team has won at home. It would be nice to steal one game in Whitby."

► Go to yorkregion.com for coverage of the series, including last night's game in Stouffville.

Reflecting on what's transpired thus far in the series, which for the most part has been a close-checking affair, the Fury haven't done anything that's caught them off-guard, Geiger said.

"They play a tight-checking game, especially in the neutral zone and they're a well coached team and they've played well," he cited.

What Geiger thinks will be paramount in what's now a best-of-three affair, is desire.

"It'll come down to who wants it more," he said. "We really need to capitalize more on getting pucks in deep to pressure their defence."

Doyle concurred and went one step further by noting Fury goalkeeper Tyler Feaver at times, has looked rather shaky.

"We've got to throw everything on net and even crash the net. I think the goal that wins this series won't be a pretty one," he said.

The other three teams playing in the Dudley-Hewitt Cup, the Central Canadian Jr. A championships, in Thunder Bay next week have been determined.

The host Thunder Bay North Stars, Soo (Ontario) Thunderbirds and the winner of last night's Game 7 in the Superior International Hockey League final, between the Fort Frances Lakers and Wisconsin Wild, are in.

All four teams open play Tuesday.

The winner of the Dudley-Hewitt Cup will advance to the RBC Cup national championships May 5 to 13 in Humboldt, Sask.

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