

# Stouffville Spirit continue to struggle

BY MICHAEL HAYAKAWA  
mhayakawa@yrmg.com

Jeff Perrin is perplexed.

What has the Stouffville Spirit head coach feeling that way isn't the manner in which is club has been performing of late.

Rather, the end result of games.

One of those was a 5-3 loss the Spirit incurred at the hands of the Whitby Fury in their Ontario Junior Hockey League tilt at the Stouffville Arena Thursday.

With the loss, the Spirit have gone winless in their last seven games.

"It's not that we're playing bad," Perrin was quick to point out. "The effort is there with our team."

What the Spirit could use though is a bit of luck.

"We just can't seem to get the bounces and with that we're not scoring," cited Perrin. "The other team gets chances and they score. They (Whitby) had two goals hit a player and go in."

"Right now I think our guys are frustrated."

The Spirit dug themselves into a hole for the better part of the first period, trailing 2-0 before Dylan Savory scored on the power play with 72 seconds remaining before the intermission.

After the Fury accounted for the lone goal in the second period to take a 3-1 lead, they carried that momentum into the third period and got two unanswered goals to pad their advantage



STAFF PHOTO/NICK IWANYSHYN

Stouffville Spirit goaltender Knick Dawe slides away a Whitby Fury shot during OJHL action at the Stouffville Arena Thursday. The Spirit's troubles continued with a 5-3 loss.

to 5-1.

The Spirit made one last-ditch effort to get back in the game as Justin Wain and Savory scored to cut the deficit to 5-3.

Unfortunately for the Spirit, they could get no closer before regulation time expired.

The Fury outshot the Spirit 25-24.

Despite their prolonged drought, Perrin said there's no need to panic.

"The guys have to go out there and just keep working hard," he said. "Sure, it's disappointing. But sooner or later we will get the bounces. It's not because we're not playing hard. That's one positive."

Trailing the Newmarket Hurricanes and Aurora Tigers by one point for first-place honours in the North Division standings,

the Spirit (nine wins, two shootout wins, one overtime win, one shootout loss, four overtime losses and nine losses, 29 points) are scheduled to resume league play against the Trenton Golden Hawks, occupants of first place in the East Division, at the Stouffville Arena tomorrow at 2:30 p.m.

In facing the Golden Hawks, Perrin acknowledged that game won't be easy to end their slump.

But if anything, he feels playing a first-place team might serve as a good incentive.

"Playing Trenton will be another hard game for sure," Perrin said.

"They're a veteran team. But maybe that's what we need — a good challenge."

# Spartans bounced in quarter-finals

The Stouffville District Secondary School Spartans senior boys' hockey team advanced to the quarter-finals of their Early Bird Tournament before being eliminated with a 2-1 loss to Malvern Collegiate (Toronto) at the Clippers Complex Thursday.

Spencer Roberts scored the lone goal for the Spartans.

"We played well," cited Spartans head coach Jamie Hewitt. "But our achilles heel this year is a lack of scoring."

"I thought we outplayed them (Malvern), but we just couldn't score."

In reaching the quarter-finals, the Spartans battled Sir Oliver Mowat Collegiate (Scarborough) to a 2-2 tie in their opening game Wednesday.

Jon Colley and Isaac Jeffers each scored once for the Spartans, who let a 2-1 lead slip away with 45 seconds remaining in the game when Sir Oliver Mowat deposited the equalizer.

Facing St. Marcellinus Secondary School (Mississauga) later that day, the Spartans got a goal from Jackson Savory and clutch goaltending from Cam Nowikow to skate off with a hard-fought 1-0 win.

That placed the Spartans in third place after round-robin action and enabled them to advance to the quarter-finals.

After losing their game to Malvern, the Spartans played St. Elizabeth Catholic High School (Thornton) in a consolation game and skated off with a 5-1 win.

Savory scored twice for the Spartans while Roberts, Alex Dajia and Colley each had one.

The Spartans are to resume league play against St. Maximilian Kolbe (Aurora) at the Clippers Complex Nov. 29 at 2:30 p.m.

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