

SPORTS: Heffernan named third captain of season

Slumping Spirit hosts another hot team tonight



STAFF PHOTO/SUSIE KOCKERSCHIEDT

Kingston Voyageur Kris Grant (left) and Stouffville Spirit forward Peyton Backus get tangled up during Kingston's 4-0 win in Stouffville Sunday. The Spirit hosts the streaking Aurora Tigers tonight.

LAST WEEK: Sunday: Kingston Voyageurs 4 vs. Stouffville Spirit 0. Spirit record: 10 wins, two overtime wins, three shootout wins, one shootout loss, five overtime losses, 21 losses, 36 points. Fourth place in North Division and one point behind Cobourg Cougars for eighth and final play-off spot in North-East Conference.

COMING UP: Today: vs. Aurora Tigers at Stouffville Arena, 7:30 p.m.; Friday: at Lindsay Muskies, 7:30 p.m.; Sunday: at Whitby Fury, 2:10 p.m.

GAME NOTES: The Stouffville Spirit picked an inopportune time to face the Kingston Voyageurs when they played host to them in an Ontario Junior Hockey League contest at the Stouffville Arena Sunday.

The Voyageurs entered the game as one of the hottest teams in the league, proprietors of a six-game winning streak. The Spirit, meanwhile, were in the throes of a four-game losing streak. When the final buzzer sounded, both trends remained intact as the Voyageurs skated off with their seventh straight victory with a 4-0 verdict.

Recently acquired forward Dylan Hutton delivered a pair of power play goals for the Voyageurs, who held a 1-0 lead after one period and 2-0 through two. Brian Nanne and Michael Casile each added singles. Colin Dziacky stopped all 32 shots directed at him to record his first shutout of the season.

The Voyageurs directed 36 shots on Spirit goalkeeper Daniel Mannella. The Spirit still lead the head-to-head series against the

Voyageurs, who with the win moved into a second-place tie with the Whitby Fury in the East Division, three games to two with one more game still to be played between the two clubs.

INSIDER: After the Jan. 10 trade deadline the Spirit named defenceman Matt Heffernan as its new team captain, the club's third this season. Robert Powers remains as one assistant captain. Spirit head coach Jeff Perrin said he will name one more assistant captain possibly before tonight's game against Aurora.

Forward Corey DeRose, the lone player on the club's injury list (thumb) is still one to two weeks away from returning.

The Spirit will be running a series of hockey camps for youngsters during P.A. days at the Stouffville Arena. The one-day camps are scheduled to take place Jan. 18, Feb. 1 and 15 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The cost per session is \$80. For further information, contact Kenny Burrows at: kenshockey@hotmail.com or call 416-990-2683.

GENERALLY SPEAKING: "We played well except for a couple of unnecessary penalties that we took and it hurt us. (Kingston is) a disciplined club and their goalie (Dziacky) played well," Perrin said of Sunday's setback.

"Early in the game we had a couple of great chances to score, but their goalie made some big saves and we missed an open net," Perrin said. "If we had scored at least once it might have been a different

game." Another deciding factor in the game was the Spirit's inability to score when given the odd-man situation. They went 0 for 6.

As for what the Spirit can do to end their five-game skid, Perrin said it's a case of forging on and forgetting about the past few outings.

"We've got to keep trying and work hard. Hopefully some bounces will start to go our way. They haven't lately and we've also been shooting ourselves in the foot," he said.

Things won't get any easier for the Spirit as they are scheduled to face a red-hot Aurora Tigers team, winners of five of their last six outings and just two points behind the Newmarket Hurricanes for first place in the North Division.

While the Tigers have won two of the three prior head-to-head encounters, Perrin noted each of those tilts were close with one decided in a shootout and another, the lone Spirit win, was in overtime.

"Any time you play a divisional game they are tight," he said.

"Aurora has loaded up and they're trying to win it all," he said. "They're a far different team than when we last saw them."

"They were a lot like us last year (when the Spirit had a veteran-laden team and won the OJHL title). It sure would be nice if we can get two points."

—Michael Hayakawa

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