



STAFF PHOTO/SUSIE KOCKERSCHIEDT

STANDING HER GROUND

Stouffville Mustang Celeste Beaudoin defends against Newmarket United's Cora Jornacion during the Mustangs 3-2 under-11 division win at Bethesda Park Tuesday.

Spirit set to open camp

The 2013-14 Ontario Junior Hockey League campaign will begin Monday for the Stouffville Spirit.

That's when the club will assemble for the first day of its main training camp at the Stouffville Arena.

Players will be reporting in at 3 p.m. The first on-ice scrimmage is slated to begin at 5 p.m.

Kenny Burrows, Spirit co-owner and general manager, said some 40 players are expected to be at camp.

From there, he said they will have to whittle the roster down to 23 before the regular season commences.

Training camp will continue at the Ninth Line arena Tuesday and Wednesday at 5 p.m. followed by the club's golf tournament at Cherry Downs in Pickering Thursday morning. A luncheon will follow at the Royal Canadian Legion in Stouffville.

The golf event, a fundraiser for the team, is sold out.

The Spirit will play a five-game preseason slate starting Aug. 16 when they play the Pickering Panthers at the Ajax Community Centre at 7:30 p.m.

The Spirit's first home pre-season game will be against the Whitby Fury at the Clippers Sports Complex Aug. 24 at 7:30 p.m.

The Spirit will open the regular season with a game against the Milton Icehawks at the Stouffville Arena Sept. 12 at 7:30 p.m.

For more on the Spirit, log on to: www.stouffvillespirit.com

Sharks attack in Bracebridge

The Stouffville Sharks squirts overcame a slow start on the softball diamond and reeled off four straight wins, capped off by a 9-6 triumph over Georgian Bay in the finals of a tournament in Bracebridge last weekend.

Spotting Georgian Bay a four-run lead in the first inning, the Sharks whittled away at the deficit to tie the game at 5-5 in the fourth inning.

After surrendering a run in the sixth to trail by one, the Sharks came back in their half of the frame by erupting with four runs to take the lead for good.

The Sharks reached the final after losing their opening game to Georgian Bay on the mercy rule.

But the Sharks rebounded by routing Owen Sound 13-3, Grimsby 18-3 and mercying Tottenham to set up a rematch with Georgian Bay in the final.

Coached by Steve Hopkins, Tom Brandon and Mike Farrell, team members included: Aidan Hopkins, Aidan Kilpatrick, Nicolas Brandon, Joshua Rundle, Jack Smalley, Cameron Smith, Mathew Offeri, Sam Roy, Evan Farrell, Braden Smith and Micheal Creegan.

Hughes working hard for another shot at NHL

BY MICHAEL HAYAKAWA
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Bobby Hughes has some unfinished business to take care of.

The 25-year-old Stouffville resident is resurrecting his professional hockey career, hoping he might someday fulfill a lifelong dream of playing in the National Hockey League.

These days, he's cautiously optimistic it's rounding into form.

Hopefully back to his play during his stellar four-year career with the Kingston Frontenacs of the Ontario Hockey League when he was a fourth-round pick of the Carolina Hurricanes in the 2006 NHL draft.

Hughes is hoping his latest stop, as a member of the Fort Wayne Komets of the East Coast Hockey League, will be the launching pad of big things ahead.

"I'm definitely excited and I'm looking forward to going there," the five-foot, 11-inch, 175-pound forward said after being dealt to them from the Alaska Aces last week.

In moving to Fort Wayne, Ind., Hughes said it would enable him to be closer to his family. From a geographical perspective, with Fort Wayne in the central United States, it might also be easier for NHL scouts to watch him.

Working in Hughes' favour was the manner in which he concluded his stint in his first and only season with the Aces last season, after returning from Germany where he played and coached for EHC 80 Nürnberg of the Bayernliga in the 2011-12 campaign.

Hughes was the Aces' second-line centre and led the club in playoff scoring with nine goals and eight assists in 11 contests.

After a slow start, he asserted himself during the second half with nine goals and 13 assists in the final 27 regular season games.

"I definitely had a rough start. I got hurt and was in bad (physical) shape," he said. "But when we lost the NHL guys (once the lock-



BOBBY HUGHES: Stouffville hockey pro knows his time to reach NHL is fading at age 25

out ended) our coach Rob Murray said we needed guys to step up and he trusted me. He used me in every situation and it allowed me to flourish."

Hughes was a solid American Hockey League player — one level below the NHL — before a legal battle he eventually won derailed his career.

Signing a one-year deal with the Komets and being a free agent, Hughes noted the Komets currently do not have any affiliation with an NHL team. But should they get one before the season starts, Hughes said it could make things easier in terms of getting an audition.

In the meantime, though, he just wants to focus his attention on getting his 'A' game back.

A big part of which, he revealed, is to enter camp in top physical condition and to continue to play with a high degree of confidence that he had while with the Aces.

"It's definitely a step-by-step process," he said. "To play in the NHL is the ultimate. But I have a lot of work to do and the plan is for me to have a good start to the season."

"I'm not getting any younger, for sure. This is sort of my last chance. I want to get back to playing where I was a few years ago."