

JR. A NOTEBOOK: Goalie nets win in OJHL debut

# Spirit set to 'showcase' defensive game for college, pro scouts

**LAST WEEK:** Friday: Pickering Panthers 2 vs. Stouffville Spirit 1. Saturday: Spirit 3 vs. Burlington Cougars 2 (shootout). Spirit record: one win, one shootout win, two losses, four points. Two-way tie for fourth place with Lindsay Muskies in North Division of Ontario Junior Hockey League.

**COMING UP:** Friday: at Wellington Dukes 7:30 p.m. Saturday: vs. Kingston Voyageurs in Oakville as part of OJHL Governors Showcase event, 4:30 p.m.

**GAME NOTES:** One of the priorities Stouffville Spirit head coach Jeff Perrin had entering this season was to reduce the number of goals surrendered by his club. Although the Ontario Junior Hockey League regular season is just in its infant stages, the Spirit appear to have done just that.

A case in point transpired this past weekend when the Spirit gave up just two goals in each of their road games against the Pickering Panthers and Burlington Cougars. The results were a heartbreaking 2-1 loss to the Panthers Friday and a dramatic 3-2 shootout win over the Cougars Saturday. In Saturday's tilt, the Spirit received a major contribution from rookie netminder Tim Bester. Making his debut between the pipes for the Spirit, the 17-year-old Water-

loo native stopped 36 of 38 shots through three periods and a five-minute sudden death overtime and thwarted three of five shots during a shootout session.

Michael Morgan, who was the Spirit's fifth shooter during the shootout, scored the game winner. Trailing 1-0 after just 47 seconds of the opening period, the Spirit came back to tie the game on a power play goal by team captain Matt Heffernan. With no scoring in the second period, the Spirit took their first lead of the game just over two minutes into the third on a power play goal by Joe Devery. But 38 seconds later, the Cougars countered with a goal to tie the game and set the stage for a scoreless five-minute overtime session and shootout. The Spirit outshot the Cougars 41-38.

The win by the Spirit came on the heels of a tough 2-1 road loss against the Pickering Panthers Friday. The Panthers took a 1-0 lead after the opening period before the Spirit took advantage of a power play opportunity early in the second stanza when Morgan scored. But the Panthers regained the upper hand for good just past the midway point of the period on Riley Devine's second goal of the game. The Panthers outshot the Spirit 26-22.



**MICHAEL MORGAN:** Sophomore forward nets shootout winner in Burlington Saturday.

**INSIDER:** On the injury front, the Spirit saw the return of forward Michael Stevens and defenceman Brady Baker to their roster last weekend. Remaining on the sidelines are forwards Justin Wain (hand) and Daryl Thomson (kneecap). Spirit head coach Jeff Perrin cited Wain could still be out one to two weeks while Thomson is

indefinite.

In the league statistical category, Spirit netminder Daniel Mannella had the sixth-best goals against average as of Monday with a 2.04 mark in three games played. In the team categories through Monday, the Spirit sport the best penalty killing percentage in the league at 95.24 per cent and are 14th in power play percentage at 18.42 per cent.

Former Spirit defenceman Simon Gysbers is playing this season in Tampere, Finland with Ilves Tampere of the SM-liiga. Gysbers toiled with the Spirit for three seasons starting in 2003 to 2006 and then went to Lake Superior State University in Sault Ste. Marie, Mich. on a hockey scholarship before joining the Toronto Marlies of the American Hockey League.

**GENERALLY SPEAKING:** "I thought we played well the whole weekend, we got good goaltending, we played well defensively and our special teams were good," Perrin said in reflecting on his club's performance through the weekend. "Against Pickering we had too many turnovers that cost us. On Saturday (against Burlington) we played really well. I thought we should have won in regulation time but we hit a few goalposts."

"When you only give up two goals a game you should win your fair share. It's a big positive for us. This year we had to improve on our goals against average and so far we have. If we keep doing that and can score at least three goals a game we should win a few games."

"To be 2-2 at the beginning of the year that's good. Hopefully we can get some wins this coming weekend," he added in reference to his club's upcoming games against the Wellington Dukes Friday and the East Division-leading Kingston Voyageurs in Oakville Saturday that's a part of the league's Governors Showcase weekend.

Perrin isn't taking Wellington or Kingston lightly.

"They're both good teams and from what I've seen they're doing OK this year. These are really big games because these teams are within our conference."

The showcase is heavily scouted by pro, college and major junior teams.

For more on the Spirit, log on to: [www.stouffvillespirit.com](http://www.stouffvillespirit.com) or catch up on Twitter with the Stouffville Spirit Jr A Hockey Club.

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