

Spirit looks to continue winning ways tonight

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The sigh of relief emanating from the Stouffville Arena Thursday evening came from the dressing room of the Stouffville Spirit.

With good reason, as the Spirit ended a six-game winless drought with a 3-2 win over the Pickering Panthers in their Ontario Junior Hockey League tilt.

Unanswered goals by Joseph Deveny and Michael Morgan in the third period enabled the Spirit to skate off with two hard-earned points and moved them out of the North Division cellar with 16 points on six wins, one shootout win, one overtime loss, one shootout loss and nine losses - one point ahead of the Lindsay Muskies and just one behind the third-place Panthers.

In assessing his club's win, Spirit head coach Jeff Perrin said they did not employ any special tactics.

It boiled down to hard work.

Especially after the first period, when the Spirit spotted the Panthers a 2-0 lead on a power play goal by Brodie Tutton, just 90 seconds after the opening faceoff, and an even strength tally by Nicholas Lepone near the midway point.

That served as a wake-up call for the Spirit in the second period as they outshot

the Panthers by 26-2.

They cut their deficit to within a goal when Peyton Backus lit the red light late in the period to set the stage for their third-period rally.

"We (Spirit coaching staff) didn't say anything between the first and second periods," revealed Perrin.

"We knew that we just had to work harder and in the second period we totally dominated and in the third period we played good and we came out with the win.

"I thought we played with a great deal of determination, we won the battles and had the will to win."

The Spirit outshot the Panthers, who lost their second straight game, 46-31.

The Spirit resume action on the road against the Georgetown Raiders today at 7:30 p.m.

Coming off a solid final 40 minutes against the Panthers, Perrin hopes his charges can sustain that momentum for an entire 60 minutes against the Raiders, a team they defeated 4-3 on Oct. 6.

"We definitely have to build off the last 40 minutes," he said in looking ahead to tonight's tilt.

"They proved hard work pays off. This time they have to do it from the start."



STAFF PHOTO/NICK IWANYSHYN

Spirit defender Matthew Heffernan (right) goes behind the net with Pickering forward Lucas Condotta during OJHL action Thursday at the Stouffville Arena. The Spirit won 3-2.

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