



POINT BLANK

STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Stouffville AA minor peewee Clipper Sebastian Schembri takes a shot at Richmond Hill Star goalie Sam Shearer, who would make the save, as Star Hayden Heinrich makes a check Saturday at the Tom Graham Arena in Richmond Hill. The Stars won 2-1. For more on Stouffville minor hockey, go to wsmha.com

JR. A NOTEBOOK

First-place Tigers should put Spirit to test at home tonight

LAST WEEK: Thursday: Newmarket Hurricanes 5 vs. Stouffville Spirit 3. Spirit record: seven wins, one shootout win, one overtime loss, one shootout loss, 11 losses, 18 points. Fourth place in North Division of the Ontario Junior Hockey League.

COMING UP: Today: vs. Aurora Tigers at Stouffville Arena, 7:30 p.m.

GAME NOTES: With no games on their OJHL schedule last weekend, Stouffville Spirit head coach Jeff Perrin gave his charges some time off. At least on the ice.

Off the ice though, the players were active in the community in an event sponsored by Stouffville Toyota to celebrate the dealership's inaugural Tailgate Party where they signed autographs Saturday.

The event came on the heels of a 5-3 loss at the hands of the host Newmarket Hurricanes in a North Division tilt last Thursday. In that contest, the Spirit took a 1-0 lead after 20 minutes on the first of two goals by Joseph Deveny with the man advantage. In the second period though, the Hurricanes stormed back by outscoring the Spirit to take a 3-2 lead. The lone bright spot for the Spirit during that stanza was a power play marker by Peyton Backus.

INSIDER: Former Spirit player John Duco made his collegiate head coaching debut for the Ryerson Rams and directed them to a pair of home ice wins over RMC 7-1 Friday and Carleton University 9-5 Saturday. An assistant coach with the Rams, Duco was subbing for head coach and Stouffville resident Graham Wise, who was serving a four-game suspension handed down by the university.

Duco played for the Spirit in the 2003-04 season and had two goals and three assists in eight games. Duco and his younger brother Mike were obtained in a late-season trade from the now-defunct Thornhill Rattlers. Mike is one of four Spirit graduates to play in the NHL - 18 games split between Vancouver and Florida. The 26-year-old now plays for the Toronto Marlies.

Darren Archibald is the latest alumnus to make the big leagues. He has played eight games for the Vancouver Canucks this fall. The Newmar-

ket native, who starred for the Spirit in 2007-08, was sent down to the Utica Comets last week.

Several former members of the Spirit had big games on the U.S. collegiate scene. Forward Matt Neal had two goals in Rensselaer Polytechnical Institute's 4-3 loss to Union Friday.

Defenceman Paul Geiger had a goal in Clarkson's 4-3 loss against Colgate Saturday. The Stouffville resident, who is in his sophomore year, is tied for third in team scoring with two goals and seven assists in 14 games.

Drake Caggiula was credited with one assist in each of the North Dakota's weekend games against visiting Minnesota-Duluth that resulted in a 4-2 win Friday and 6-3 loss Saturday. In 10 games, the second-year forward has four goals and four assists.

GENERALLY SPEAKING: Perrin felt his club had an opportunity to win Thursday.

"Our power play was half decent where we got two goals and our penalty killing was pretty good considering," he said.

Unfortunately for the Spirit, one such infraction, a four-minute high sticking penalty incurred by rookie defenceman Brady Baker, proved costly as the Hurricanes capitalized on that opportunity late in the second period that put them ahead for good.

"We had to use the same guys on our penalty killing and they were eventually burned out," he said.

Perrin said it was back to work Monday as he put his charges back through their regular practice routine before they face the North Division-leading Aurora Tigers for the first time this season.

The Tigers have won four of their last five games.

"They're an experienced team and it's a divisional game for us. It should be a tight-checking game," he said.

"We definitely have to limit our mistakes and make fewer miscues than them. And we will have outwork them, play a solid team game and capitalize on what scoring chances we get. If we can do those things, we have a chance to win," he said.

- Michael Hayakawa

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