

Stouffville Sun-Tribune

SPORTS

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WEEKEND CAMP FOR PLAYOFF-HUNGRY JR. A TEAM

Spirit hopes to find 'diamonds in rough'

BY MICHAEL HAYAKAWA
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When the Stouffville Spirit conduct their annual spring rookie camp at the Stouffville Arena Friday and Saturday, they will keep a close watch out for potential prospects.

While the Ontario Junior Hockey League club's braintrust will look for the obvious qualities, including an ability to skate, shoot the puck, dish out a few punishing hits or exhibit some grit, they are also searching for something a little extra.

That being players who are highly skilled, said Frank Robinson, Spirit director of player personnel.

Especially since the Spirit are hoping to end a two-year playoff drought when the 2014-15 regular season campaign begins.

With more than 60 skaters and 12 goalkeepers comprised largely of those who played minor midget, midget and Jr. C hockey last season in attendance at the camp, the Spirit are optimistic they can unearth such talent.

"We're looking for skill," Robinson said, "players who might be diamonds in the rough that will show up and who can compete at our level."

For those in attendance, there will be plenty of opportunity to showcase their talents as they will be placed on one of six teams and play four games within almost a 24-hour period.

Through the two-day process Robinson revealed they hope to identify 20 such players who can pass the initial audition.

From there, the successful candidates will be invited to attend a second level team

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camp at the end of May.

At this camp, Robinson said the rookies will take to the Stouffville Arena ice to compete against a group of potential returnees.

Despite not losing any players to graduation, Robinson said the Spirit could have nine open spots on their roster when the new season begins...

"The kids from the rookie camp can look good against players their own age," Robinson said. "But we want to see how they stack up against older, more mature players."

Despite not losing any players to graduation, Robinson said the Spirit could have nine open spots on their roster when the new season begins and said there's plenty of opportunity for the new faces to make their presence felt.

"We're pleased with the rookies we have coming out," Robinson said. "But we definitely have some decisions to make."



STAFF PHOTO/SUSIE KOCKERSCHIEDT

SPORTCENTRE TO STOUFFVILLE

TSN SportsCentre anchor Kate Beirness (from left) had Toronto Furies players Kori Cheverie, Britni Smith and Jenelle Kohanchuk on her squad in the Stouffville Amateur Hockey League women's division's annual charity tourney at the Stouffville Clippers Complex last weekend. The 20 teams raised \$6,000 for Five With Drive www.5wd.ca

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