

Stouffville Sun-Tribune
SPORTS

SPIRIT DEALS FOR SIZE, SCORING

Add Pickering's top scorer, towering Aurora Tiger on eve of training camp

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For the Stouffville Spirit, the official start to the 2014-15 Ontario Junior Hockey League campaign begins Sunday.

That's when the club — four goalkeepers, 14 defencemen and 17 forwards — will report for testing under the direction of hockey fitness guru and Spirit strength and conditioning coach Randy Smith at his Gormley-based BodySmith International Sport and Fitness Training facility at 2 p.m.

From there, the Spirit will commence on-ice sessions at the Stouffville Arena Monday starting at 4 p.m. and continue Tuesday before their first pre-season tilt against the Pickering Panthers at the Ajax Community Centre at 8:30 p.m.

Spirit director of player personnel Frank Robinson hopes to set the tone early, starting with Sunday's off-ice testing.

FITNESS TESTING

"At the start of training camp, we need to do two things — make certain our guys' fitness is good and we need to make sure the best 23 players will be ready for the regular season where we start with three games in three days," he said.

Before training camp commences though, the Spirit were active in preparing their roster by making a couple of transactions last weekend.

One of those saw the Spirit acquire Alex Gilmour from the Aurora Tigers for future considerations.

A six-foot, four-inch, 207-pound, 18-year-old forward, Gilmour amassed seven goals and nine assists in 52 games in his debut with the OJHL runner-up Tigers last season.

What intrigued the Spirit to acquire Gilmour were his physical attributes and potential based on what Robinson saw of him prior to his arrival in Aurora.

"Alex Gilmour is a big power forward who is attractive to us for his size. We liked him in midget and he did well for Aurora with limited ice time, due to their older team," said Robinson.

Another trade the Spirit made saw forwards Mike Morgan and Graham Pickard



GARY KEYS / OJHL IMAGES

Brodie Tutton was traded to the Stouffville Spirit by the Pickering Panthers this week. The goal-starved Spirit hope to return to the playoffs this season. Tutton led Pickering in scoring last season. Training camp opens this weekend.

go to the Pickering Panthers in exchange for their top scorer, Brodie Tutton, and future considerations.

A six-foot, 175-lb., 20-year-old veteran forward from Courtice, Tutton compiled 22 goals and 31 assists in 53 tilts with Pickering last year.

He also spent the 2012-13 season with the Panthers after making his OJHL debut with the Kingston Voyageurs in 2011-12.

Robinson believes Tutton will continue to improve on his offensive numbers. "We wanted to add scoring and we

believe Brodie can help us in that area," he said.

While with the Spirit, Morgan was their third-leading scorer last season with 15 goals and 14 assists in 48 regular season contests.

Pickard, whom the Spirit picked up part way through last season, had seven goals and 11 assists in 25 games.

In making the two transactions, Robinson acknowledged they were difficult decisions.

"When you move players that you grow attached to, it always makes it dif-

ficult. But you have to look out for what is best for team," Robinson said.

On a separate note, the Spirit could also lose their leading scorer last season, Michael Carcone, who is going to Drummondville in the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League.

During his time last season with the Spirit, Carcone had 12 goals and 25 assists in 49 games.

While wishing Carcone the best and feeling it was a good decision he made, Robinson felt his best performances are still to come.

"It is great move for Mike who had a very good year with Spirit last year and is a late bloomer," he said of the 18-year-old Whitby native.

CARCONO AT QMJHL CAMP

As a part of training camp, the Spirit like other OJHL clubs, will lose players who were drafted by Ontario Hockey League teams, to their respective teams that could either result in them returning or possibly signing with them.

Among those attending OHL camps during the week of Aug. 25 from the Spirit's existing roster include: Adam Burnett and Nick Thomakos to the Peterborough Petes, Brady Baker (London Knights), Colton Samsom (Owen Sound Attack), Justin Wain (Ottawa 67's), Nathan Hudgin (Kitchener Rangers) and Chad Burrows (Erie Otters).

"When you move players that you grow attached to, it always makes it difficult. But you have to look out for what is best for team."

While those players will be away, Robinson said they will bring in some young players and add to our main camp roster that week to fill what vacancies exist.

The Spirit are scheduled to make their pre-season home debut Aug. 23 against the Pickering Panthers at the Stouffville Arena at 7:30 p.m.

The regular season begins Sept. 8 in Mississauga. The home opener is Sept. 13 against Aurora.

The Spirit hosts its golf tournament at The Maples of Ballantrae today.

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