

JR. A NOTEBOOK

Coach hopes to watch Spirit get back on track

LAST WEEK: Friday: Aurora Tigers 7 vs. Stouffville Spirit 1. Saturday: Georgetown Raiders 9 vs. Spirit 2. Spirit record: 4-7-0-8, fourth place in North Division, Ontario Junior Hockey League.

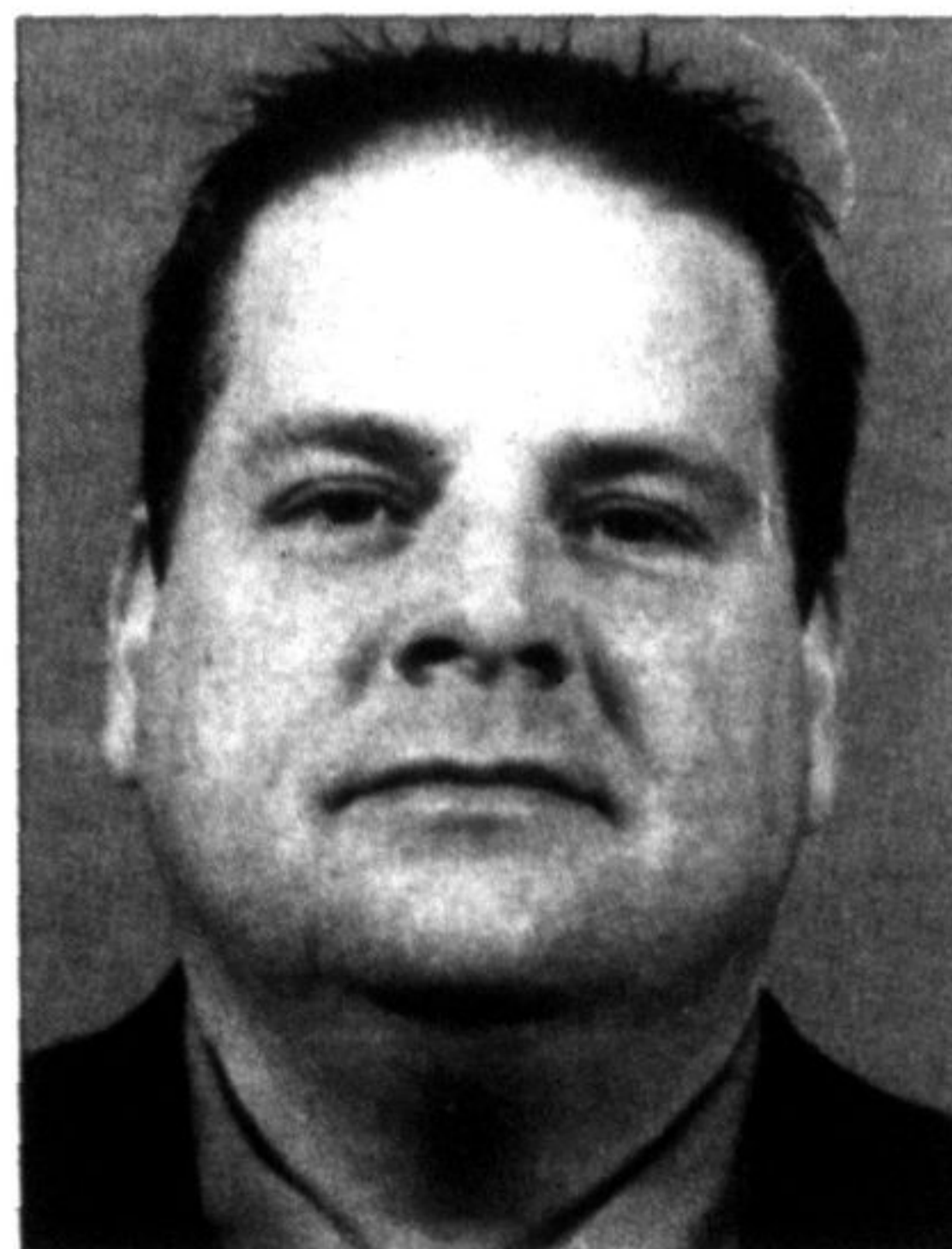
COMING UP: Saturday: vs. Pickering Panthers at Stouffville Arena, 7:30 p.m.; Sunday: at Orangeville Flyers, 3:30 p.m.; Monday: vs. Trenton Golden Hawks at Stouffville Arena, 2:30 p.m.

GAME NOTES: Just when it appeared the Stouffville Spirit found some light at the end of the tunnel after snapping a five-game losing streak by winning two in a row during the Ontario Junior Hockey League's Governor's Showcase weekend, the roof might have collapsed on them. Playing two games last weekend, the Spirit got off to a rough start after they were pummeled 7-1 by the host Aurora Tigers Friday. Just 24 hours later and returning to the friendly confines of the Stouffville Arena, the Spirit were gracious hosts when they allowed the Georgetown Raiders to come in and skate off with a resounding 9-2 win.

In Friday's tilt, the Spirit trailed 2-0 after the opening 20 minutes and allowed a shorthanded goal early in the second period to fall behind 3-0. The closest they would get came when Nick Thomakos delivered a power play goal to get them back to within two just before the midway

point of the period. But the Tigers countered with a pair of goals to take a 5-1 lead entering the third period. In the final 20 minutes the Tigers added two more goals to round out the scoring. The Tigers pelted 52 shots on Spirit rookie netminders Aaron Taylor, who started the game before giving way near the midway point to Conor McCollum. Included in those totals were 20 in the first period and 22 in the second. The Spirit, meanwhile, delivered 21 shots on net.

In Saturday's contest, the Raiders were buoyed by a four-goal, two-assist performance from Steve Hladin in a 9-2 romp. The Raiders jumped out to a 4-0 lead after the first period before Tyson Bruce got the Spirit on the scoresheet just 30 seconds into the second period. That would be as close as the Spirit would get as the Raiders countered with two unanswered goals to take a 6-1 lead. The Spirit got one more goal from Brodie Tutton to get back to within four goals before the Raiders responded with two more goals before the period concluded to take a commanding 8-2 lead. The Raiders accounted for the lone goal of the third period to round out the scoring. The Raiders outshot the Spirit 35-34. McCollum started the game in goal before he was relieved by Taylor just over five minutes into the second period.



JEFF PERRIN: Stouffville Spirit coach has to sit out two games because a player left the bench to fight.

The game had its chippy moments, including the Georgetown bench doing verbal battle with Taylor in the late going. Spirit forward Joe Deveny and Georgetown's Francois Cote, stopped from fighting in the second period by the linesmen, had a brief tilt in the third. Deveny picked up an extra four minutes in penalties and a second game misconduct for leaving the bench to fight.

INSIDER: Deveny's actions during Saturday's contest earned him a two-game suspension while defenceman Cameron Lintner, who was cited for playing without a helmet at the end of regulation time, will receive a one-game suspension. Also receiving a two-game suspension was Spirit head coach Jeff Perrin for allowing Deveny to leave the bench. While Perrin can watch the next two games from the stands, assistant coach Brad Barton will serve as head coach.

The players on the Stouffville Spirit are doing their part for Luca Gennuso. The Stouffville toddler who nearly drowned in his family's back yard pool on Victoria Day is home now but undergoing extensive therapy — which is not covered by health insurance. The Spirit players are raising money through a project they call "Kills for Luca". For every successful penalty kill they are making a donation to Luca. They raised \$140 during the first three games of the program.

In the league's scoring race, Thomakos is among the leaders with five goals and 11 assists in 11 games to sit in ninth place.

GENERALLY SPEAKING: "It was frustrating," Perrin said of his club's fortunes last weekend. "In our game with Aurora we didn't come to play. Against George-

town we played well early on but we committed three bad giveaways in the first period they capitalized on and the next thing you know we're down 4-0. The more we tried, the worse it got."

In assessing his club's recent woes, Perrin said there's no one individual or particular area to blame. Rather, he said it was a collective effort.

With a few days off before their next game against North Division rival Pickering Panthers Saturday, the first of three games in as many days the club will play, Perrin said they will spend some extra time working on play in their own end during practices this week.



"We just have to get back to basics and see how it goes from there," he said.

As for who will start in goal in their next game against Pickering, Perrin is undecided at this moment and said a decision will be made based on practices this week.

In looking ahead to their upcoming week-end slate of games, Perrin acknowledged they need to get back on the winning track so as not to fall far behind in the standings in the early going.

"Every game is big for us," he said.

- Michael Hayakawa

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