

# Lack of scoring doesn't phase Spirit coach

**LAST WEEK:** Saturday: Stouffville Spirit 3 vs Oakville Blades 3 (overtime). Tuesday: Whitby Fury 2 vs. Spirit 1. Spirit record: 14-12-2-30, third place in North Division.

**COMING UP:** Saturday vs. Lindsay Muskies at Stouffville Arena, 7:30 p.m. Sunday at Toronto Jr. Canadiens, 7:30 p.m.

**GAME NOTES:** The Stouffville Spirit are in a bit of a slump. But what ails the Spirit is something that can easily be rectified in terms of generating some offence.

The lack of productivity hurt the Spirit when they travelled to Whitby for their Ontario Junior Hockey League tilt against the Fury as they came out on the short end of a 2-1 verdict Tuesday. Scott Kirton and Nik Coric with a power play goal just before the midway point of the opening period staked the Fury to a 2-0 lead through the opening 20 minutes. After a scoreless second period and with time winding down, Spirit head coach Jeff Perrin pulled goalkeeper Aaron Taylor in favour of an extra attacker. The move paid off as Alex Gilmour scored with just 53 seconds remaining in regulation time to get the Spirit to within one. But that would be all of the offence the Spirit would generate before time expired. The Fury outshot the Spirit, who suffered their third straight road tilt, 32-31.

The loss came on the heels of a 3-3 overtime tie against the Oakville Blades at the Stouffville Arena Saturday. Saving the day for the Spirit was Gilmour, who scored with just

under two and a half minutes remaining in regulation time to tie the score and set the stage for two scoreless overtime frames. With the Blades nursing a 2-1 lead entering the final 20 minutes of regulation time, the Spirit tied the game just 63 seconds into the third period on a goal by Brodie Tutton. But the Blades battled back to take a 3-2 lead on a goal by Kamil Tkaczuk past the midway mark of the period to set the stage for Gilmour's game-tying marker.

The Spirit opened the scoring in the first period on a power play goal by Matthew Dunlop that stood entering the first intermission. The Spirit outshot the Blades 47-43.

**INSIDER:** The Spirit sent forward Matt Tustin to the Lindsay Muskies in exchange for cash. Spirit director of player personnel Frank Robinson said the move was done to give Tustin more ice time. In 21 games with the Spirit, Tustin had one goal and two assists.

Nick Thomakos continues to lead the Spirit in team scoring with 12 goals and 19 assists in 26 games played.

Former Spirit forward Drake Caggiola continues to lead the University of North Dakota men's hockey team in scoring after he collected a pair of assists in his club's 3-2 win over visiting University of Nebraska-Omaha, Saturday. In 15 games, the junior forward has seven goals and 13 assists. Stouffville resident and American International College junior forward Chris Porter earned one assist in his club's 3-2 road loss to Dartmouth College Saturday. Through 13

games Porter, who also serves as the club's assistant captain, had one goal and eight assists.

**GENERALLY SPEAKING:** "It was a good game," said Spirit head coach Jeff Perrin on Tuesday's loss. "Both teams could have won. We're having a tough time scoring right now. We're hitting posts or their goalie gets hot. But it happens. You go through this all the time during a season.

"But our guys have been playing well and we can't complain with that."

In looking ahead to their next two games that they will play in as many days, starting against the Lindsay Muskies at the Stouffville Arena Saturday, followed by a road tilt against the Toronto Junior Canadiens Sunday, Perrin was quick to acknowledge they will be crucial at this juncture of the season in terms of their regular season positioning within the North Division standings.

"It's an important game," Perrin said of the game with Lindsay. "We've got to keep them behind us in the standings and at the same time, try to gain ground on the teams above us.

"The last time we played Toronto we won (2-1 on Nov. 15), but we had to hang on. They're a fast team and they have good goaltending.

"Hopefully we will get a bounce or two in our favour and we've got to be a little tougher in front of their net."

-Michael Hayakawa

## Spartans in Oshawa tourney

The Stouffville District Secondary School Spartans lost their York Region Athletic Association senior boys' tier one hockey contest 3-1

to Markham's St. Brother Andre Catholic High School Cardinals at Mount Joy Arena Tuesday. Zach Roberts scored for Stouffville.

Roberts and Quinten Volpe scored in a 2-2 tie with the Cardinals last week.

The Spartans are in the Maxwell Heights Secondary School Tournament in Whitby and Oshawa this week before resuming league play at Huron Heights (Newmarket) at the Magna Centre starting at 2:45 p.m. Monday.

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