

FLYERS

Inserts for Thurs., September 24, 2015

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SPORTS

Spirit losing games, players

LAST WEEK: Friday: Pickering Panthers 6 vs. Stouffville Spirit 3. Sunday: Toronto Patriots 4 vs. Spirit 2. Spirit record: 0-6-0-0-0.

COMING UP: Yesterday vs. Georgetown Raiders at HarborCentre in Buffalo, N.Y. (part of Governors Showcase). Today vs. St. Michaels Buzzers at HarborCentre in Buffalo, N.Y. (part of Governors Showcase) 10 a.m. Oct. 2 at Trenton Golden Hawks, 7:30 p.m.

For the Stouffville Spirit, victories have been hard to come by thus far in the 2015-16 Ontario Junior Hockey League regular season. In fact, the Spirit were still searching for that first win when they left for Buffalo yesterday, after a 6-3 setback against the Pickering Panthers Friday followed by a 4-2 loss against the defending league champion Toronto Patriots in a battle of winless clubs Sunday. Both losses came on the road.

INSIDER: The Spirit could be seeking a veteran forward. Co-owner and general manager Kenny Burrows, who already dealt four veterans to Markham, said Alex Gilmour will remain with the Des Moines Buccaneers of the United States Hockey League. The Spirit will receive a transfer fee. Defenceman Greg Allen remains with the Oshawa Generals of the Ontario Hockey League. Should Allen remain with the Generals, Burrows said that might force them to add a veteran blueliner to their roster.

On the positive side, the Spirit welcomed the return of veteran netminder Aaron Taylor, who started for the club in their 3-1 loss to the Aurora Tigers at the Stouffville Arena last Thursday. As for their other veteran goalkeeper, Conor

McCollum, Burrows speculated he could be out an additional one to two weeks before returning to the fold.

GENERALLY SPEAKING: "I felt pretty good," Taylor said upon conclusion of Thursday's game after incurring a dislocated right shoulder during a preseason contest. "I had to persuade the trainer to let me go. I had a few practices before the game and before I played they wrapped my shoulder up and I hoped for the best.

"Right now I consider myself to be at around 95 per cent healthy."

Citing the Spirit got off to a slow start last season in which they were 2-7 before turning their fortunes around en route to qualifying for the postseason, Nathan Hudgin remained confident they can turn things around in similar fashion. The key, he said, is for the young players on the squad to become acclimated with their systems and pace of play in the league.

"We've been in every game so far. It's not like we're getting blown out. But we will pick things up," said Hudgin, who scored in both weekend games. "Right now we have a new group of guys and it's just a matter of them coming together."

He also felt a big factor in the club's slow start has been their special teams play. Against Toronto, they were just 1-for-6 in power-play opportunities.

"We need to work on our power play," he said. "When things start to come together it'll come easy for us. Once we get that first win, we'll be fine."

— Michael Hayakawa

Tennis, soccer teams added at high school

Stouffville District Secondary School is fielding a couple of teams in new sports to go along with its traditional fall entries.

New this fall will be a Spartans tennis team along with a junior boys' soccer team. New teachers helped.

"It was just a matter of getting coaches and a couple of people have stepped up," said Jamie Hewitt. "In high school sports, the rule is you have to have a teacher from the school who will serve as a staff sponsor at every game and practice."

Along with that, the head of phys-ed pointed out the school's population is getting larger.

"You're always trying to offer as many sports as you can and it's nice to see," he said.

Slated to enter tier two play in the York Region Athletic Association, the junior boys' soccer team will be coached by Mark Carducci. Coaching the tennis team, which is co-ed, is John Piper.

Along with those new varsity teams, the Spartans will field their traditional fall squads.

For boys, that includes seven's rugby, volleyball, golf and cross country.

Hewitt will serve as head coach for the senior boys' tier one rugby team while Rob Edmondson will handle the junior tier one team and Glenn Tarver, the Grade 9 bantams who will compete in the tier two junior circuit.

In volleyball, Steve Jimmo will coach the senior boys' tier one team while Christina Giles returns to coach junior tier one.

Lisa DeVos will lead the golf team, which won last year's YRAA boys' title. There was not enough interest for a girls' team.

Cross country, which is offered to boys and girls, will be directed by Bill Creesor.

For girls, the Spartans will field a tier two field hockey team coached by Sarah Bubnic.

Tara LaBar will coach the Spartans' sevens rugby team, which were YRAA finalists last year.

In basketball, the Spartans will field just a junior girls' tier two team to be coached by Sarah Aveddato.

— Michael Hayakawa

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