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JR. A NOTEBOOK

# Weekend could seal Spirit's chances

**LAST WEEK:** Friday: Stouffville Spirit 6 vs. Whitby Fury 3. Saturday: Kingston Voyageurs 5 vs. Spirit 3. Spirit record: 18-22-1-3-40. Fourth place North Division, Ontario Junior Hockey League

**COMING UP:** Friday: at Pickering Panthers, 7:30 p.m. Saturday: vs. Cobourg Cougars at Stouffville Arena, 7:30 p.m. Sunday: vs. Orangeville Flyers at Stouffville Arena, 2:30 p.m.

With 10 games remaining in their regular season schedule, the Stouffville Spirit's mission is plain and simple - just win. The Spirit, who have lost five of their last six outings, are seven points out of playoff spots held by Newmarket, Cobourg and Whitby. At this juncture, any loss would put their postseason aspirations in jeopardy.

They skated off with a win and loss last weekend. The most recent loss was a 5-3 setback against the visiting Kingston Voyageurs - ranked No. 19 in Canada and second in the OJHL - Saturday. The Spirit got off to a good start when they took advantage of a double minor handed to Kingston's Matthew Lourenco and team captain Spencer Roberts scored on the power play just before the midway mark of the opening period.

The Spirit battled back to tie the game at 2-2 early in the third period on a goal by Alex Williamson.

The Spirit though, would get no closer. With 27 seconds remaining in the third period, the Spirit got a goal from Thomas. But it was too little, too late.

Not helping matters for the Spirit were a couple of goals they thought they had scored that were waved off by the officials. Both clubs directed 26 shots on net.

The Spirit entered that game in a positive frame after they doubled the count on the host Whitby Fury 6-3 Friday. Anchoring the Spirit offence were Nathan Hudgin and Chad Burrows, who each scored a pair of goals.

Whitby outshot Stouffville 45-31 in a fast-paced game that saw just seven infractions called.

**INSIDER:** The Ontario Junior Hockey League launched the fifth annual Fan Favourite Award balloting Monday. All fans will be allowed to submit player names in an online form found on the home page of the OJHL website, [www.ojhl.ca](http://www.ojhl.ca) until March 31. The winner will be the player who receives the most submissions through the course of the online voting. Former Spirit captain Andrew Doyle won the honour in its first year.

**GENERALLY SPEAKING:** Despite the loss to Kingston, Spirit head coach Jeff Perrin could not fault his players with their performance.

"We just couldn't find a way to get the puck in the net," he said. "When we did it was a case of one goal being waved off because the net was off and another one I'm not sure why the ref waved it off."

"The biggest difference, though, was that they (Kingston) finished their chances and we didn't. We had chances. Especially in the second period when we had three power play opportunities. But we didn't. I thought our guys played well and put the effort in and just didn't get rewarded and that happens."

With their regular season winding down, Perrin was quick to acknowledge they have to get points in each of their contests.

"We've got to get points somehow," he said.

What might be the make or break point to their fortunes could transpire this coming weekend when they play three games in as many days. Perrin is hoping if his club can put fourth the same effort in those contests, the rewards will come their way this time around.

"We've got to find a way to get three wins," he said.

- Michael Hayakawa

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