

# Hughes' Spirit-ed play instrumental in weekend wins

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When Andrew Hughes was dealt to the Stouffville Spirit from the Pickering Panthers in the off-season, he was a little concerned with what was in store for him during the current Ontario Junior Hockey League season.

Turns out the 19-year-old forward need not be concerned.

So far, he's elated to be with the

Spirit, who occupy first place in the North Division standings with a 9-2-1-19 record.

A big part of the club's success can be attributed to the five-foot, 11-inch, 160-pound Hughes, who collected a goal and one assist in the Spirit's 5-3 road win over the Toronto Patriots Monday and two goals in a 4-1 win over the Markham Royals at the Stouffville Arena Saturday.

"Coming to Stouffville is one

of the best things that's happened to me," he said. "This team has a bunch of great guys, it's a good team and I love it."

Employed on a line with recently acquired Brett McInall and Joseph Teofilo, Hughes credited his club's win over Markham in their ability to corral key faceoffs and in killing penalties.

While the Spirit could easily have incurred a letdown after playing

a highly emotional game against Markham, Hughes noted the club sustained their intensity Monday.

"Coach (Jeff Perrin) said for us to just keep skating and forechecking and that's what we did and it worked," said Hughes, who has six goals and five assists in 12 games.

Citing the Spirit knew what potential Hughes possessed in dealing for him, Perrin has been pleased in how he's acquitted himself.

"He's been good and he's been scoring the odd goal here and there," he said.

As for the club's early success, Hughes conceded it's exceeded his expectations.

"Our team is kind of a younger team and I figured maybe we would get off to a slow start and get better as the season progressed. But we're off to a fast start and I'm happy with that," he said.

## New Stouffville Spirit acquisitions paying dividends

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Kenny Burrows is a firm believer that patience can be a virtue.

When the Ontario Junior Hockey League regular season began, the Stouffville Spirit co-owner and general manager acknowledged his club was looking to add some depth.

This despite the early-season success the Spirit has experienced after winning eight of its first 10

outings.

With the Spirit playing host to the Markham Royals in an early-season battle for first place in the league's North Division standings Saturday, Stouffville added two new faces to its roster in six-foot, 190-pound forward Brett McInall and his twin brother Zac, a six-foot, one-inch, 185-lb. defenceman.

The 18-year-old Milton residents, who were signed by the Spirit Friday after starting the season with the Calgary Mustangs of the Alber-

ta Junior Hockey League, made an immediate impact in helping Stouffville take sole possession of first place with a 4-1 win at the Stouffville Arena.

Brett scored the game-winning marker on the power play late in the first period.

"We needed some depth and we've been looking for about a month," Burrows said.

Noting the club was going with just five defencemen and without veteran forward Stefan Palatsiadis,

who might be out for the year with an ACL injury he incurred while attending North Bay's OHL training camp, Burrows said the wear and tear might eventually catch up with his players during the course of the marathon schedule.

Burrows was quick to credit assistant general manager Thayne Halliburton for finding the twins, as he had done some homework on them.

The pair played last season with the French River Rapids of the

Northern Ontario Junior Hockey League, where Brett amassed 20 goals and 24 assists and Zac had three goals and 17 assists, with both playing in 52 games.

What impressed Burrows was their offensive upside.

"Brett is a goal scorer and point getter who works hard and Zac is a puck-moving defenceman that we needed," he said.

The Spirit resume play on the road against the Toronto Patriots Monday at 1:30 p.m.

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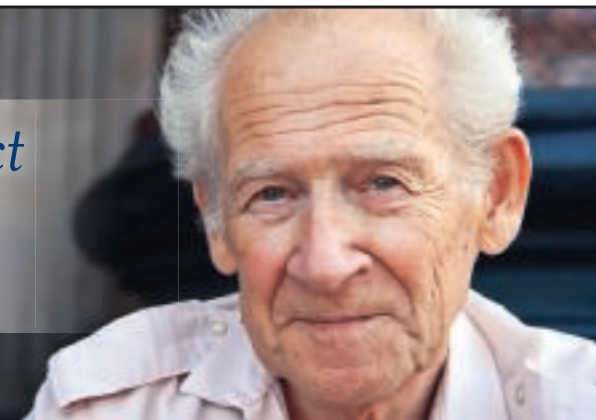
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