

B I G W E E K F O R M I N O R M I D G E T S



Oakville minor midget AAA Rangers forward Zack Dybowski (left) tries to get around Huron Perth Lakers opponent Erik MacDonald yesterday at the OHL Cup tournament in Mississauga. Dybowski's third-period goal earned the Rangers a 2-2 tie in the tournament opener. | photo by Michael Ivanin — Special to the Beaver

Minor midgets claim Oakville's first OMHA title of year

The Oakville minor midget AAA Rangers won the town's first Ontario Minor Hockey Association championship of the season Sunday in Whitby.

Oakville beat the two-time defending champs Whitby Wildcats 2-0 in their own rink to win the gold medal. In the past two weekends, the Rangers have gone 9-0-1 to win a South Central Triple A qualifying tournament in Hamilton and then the OMHA title, outscoring their opponents 45-6 in the process.

OMHA championship game MVP Brett McKenzie and tournament MVP Mark Bzowey scored first-period goals to silence the pro-Whitby crowd and goaltender Adrian Clark posted the shutout Sunday. Earlier in the tournament, the Rangers posted round-robin wins over Whitby (3-2), the Barrie Colts (5-1) and the Southern Tier Admirals (8-1), and tied the Central Ontario Wolves 2-2.

“We knew we had a strong team going in and if we stayed focused we would have a good chance to win it,” Bzowey said.

Other members of the team are goaltender Brendan McGlynn, defencemen Matt Spencer, Andrew Burns, Anthony Baxter, Kyle Capobianco and Troy Henley, and forwards Jesse Barwell, Sean Kohler, Blake LeVarno, Zack Dybowski, Cody Petawabano, Adam Craievich, Matt Luff and Cole Buchan. The team is coached by Duncan Harvey and Bruce Robertson. Caitlin Harvey is the team trainer.

Duncan Harvey said the team's strong first period was the key to the gold-medal-game win.

“It was a packed house and those two quick goals took the crowd

out of the game. Other than a couple of big hits later on, they had to nothing to cheer about.”

Harvey added defensive zone play was a determining factor.

“We won most of the puck battles in the corners and in front of our net and our wingers got pucks out off the wall. It's not always the glory plays that win you games.”

The Rangers are back in action this week as the top-ranked team in the OHL Cup minor midget tournament, which features the top teams in Ontario and a couple of entries from the United States. The tournament is being played at Mississauga's Hershey Centre, home rink of the OHL's Mississauga Steelheads.

Oakville opened the tournament yesterday (Wednesday) morning with a 2-2 tie with the Huron Perth Lakers. Burns and Dybowski scored for the Rangers in support of McGlynn.

Oakville was slated to face Central Ontario yesterday afternoon. The Rangers continue round-robin play today (Thursday) with a 1:30 p.m. match with the Thunder Bay Kings and tomorrow (Friday) with a 9:45 a.m. contest against the Toronto Jr. Canadiens.

The 20-team tournament will conclude Sunday with the championship game at Toronto's Herb Carnegie Arena.

A total of 154 players who competed in last year's OHL Cup were selected in the OHL Priority Selection, including 17 first-round picks and nine of the first 10 players selected.

— A team photo of the Rangers can be viewed at <http://bit.ly/ZIoQCx>

Ten Rangers teams in playdown finals

Ten Minor Oaks Hockey Association rep teams are in the finals of their respective Ontario Minor Hockey Association playdowns.

All series are a first-to-six points format. Two points are awarded for every win, and one point is awarded for each tie.

The **minor atom** AE Rangers will open their series against New Tecmuseth Saturday. Game 2 of that series will be contested March 20 at Glen Abbey Recreation Centre, beginning at 7:30 p.m.

The **atom** AE Rangers take on Flamborough, beginning with Game 1 Saturday at Glen Abbey (4 p.m.).

The **atom** A Rangers draw Cobourg in their final, which begins at 7:30 p.m. tomorrow (Friday) at Joshua's Creek Arenas.

The **atom** AA Rangers will open their series tonight (Thursday) in Barrie, then host Game 2 Saturday at Sixteen Mile (12:30 p.m.).

The **minor peewee** A Rangers face Napanee in their final, which will begin this weekend in Napanee for Games 1 and 2. The series will shift to Oakville March 23-24 for the third and fourth games.

The **peewee** AE Rangers are clashing with Stoney Creek, beginning with a contest last night (Wednesday) at Joshua's Creek Arenas.

The **peewee** A Rangers also began their final last night, visiting Barrie. Game 2 is slated for tomorrow at Glen Abbey, beginning at 7:50 p.m.

The **minor bantam** AE Rangers will host the first two games of their series with Peterborough. Game 1 will be played Saturday at Sixteen Mile Sports Complex (1 p.m.) and Game 2 will be contested March 20 at River Oaks Recreation Centre.

The **bantam** AE Rangers' series against Orangeville will begin tomorrow with a 9 p.m. contest at Joshua's Creek.

The **minor midget** AA Rangers visit Ajax for their series opener Saturday. Oakville will host Game 2 Sunday at Joshua's Creek, beginning at 7:40 p.m.

AAA championship tournaments

AAA-level teams compete in OMHA championship tournaments instead of playdowns.

The **atom**, **minor bantam** and **midget** Rangers have already qualified for their OMHA championship tournaments. The **novice**, **minor peewee**, **peewee** and **bantam** Rangers hope to qualify this weekend.



Oakville bantam AE Rangers player Adam Lefebvre (in blue) goes up and over a Lasalle opponent during the OMHA playdowns.

| photo by Michael Beard — Special to the Beaver