

Jon Kuiperij
Sports Editor
sports@oakvillebeaver.com

Sports

"Connected to your Community"



Pictured clockwise from top left, the Oakville atom AE, minor atom AE, bantam AE 1 and minor bantam AE Rangers all won Ontario Minor Hockey Association championships recently.

| photos submitted

MOHA's AE teams are movin' on up

The Minor Oaks Hockey Association has announced it will move its additional entry (AE) rep teams to the A level of the Tri-County Minor Hockey League's Smith Division next season as part of a pilot program.

According to a release posted on the MOHA's website, the decision was made due to the overwhelming success of Rangers AE teams this season. Five Oakville AE squads have already won Ontario Minor Hockey Association titles this spring.

Team selection will continue as in the past, with the A team being selected prior to the AE team. For the purpose of league standings, the A team will be referred to as A-Red and the AE team as A-Blue.

At the minor peewee (2002 birth year) level, the Rangers will move their A team up to the TCMHL's AA Bowen Division.

The MOHA will also expand its AE 2 program from two to four teams next season. AE 2 teams in minor peewee, peewee, minor bantam and bantam will compete in the TCMHL's AE Harrison Division.

In addition, the MOHA will no longer offer tyke 3 programming. The association said the program conflicts with the MOHA's stated goals of providing fundamental skill development and consistency in what is taught to entry-level players.

The Rangers will ice 40 teams in the 2013-14 season, the most in the organization's history, with the goal of providing the best environment for players to develop while also giving more Oakville hockey players the opportunity to play rep in their community.

Coach support and age-group development are two other key initiatives of the MOHA next season.

"The MOHA has taken a leadership position in player development; one that may sacrifice winning trophies for one that will see player development put first," said MOHA vice-president of rep Graham Burton. "Winning is not our focus or priority. Ironically, winning is often the by-product of a consistent and thorough skill development program, which we will put in place."

Four Oakville additional entry squads win OMHA titles

by Jon Kuiperij
Beaver Sports Editor

Four Minor Oaks Hockey Association additional entry (AE) rep teams won Ontario Minor Hockey Association championships over the past week.

Following are details of the success enjoyed by the title-winning minor atom, atom, minor bantam and bantam AE squads.

Minor atom

Practice didn't necessarily make the Oakville minor atom AE Rangers perfect, but it certainly had plenty of other advantages.

In its first season at the rep level, the team won an OMHA championship, clinching the title with a 6-2 victory Saturday in New Tecumseth that completed a three-game sweep of the final.

Oakville outscored New Tecumseth 14-2 in the championship series after losing just once in its previous two series, a sweep of Orangeville in the quarter-finals and a 3-1 series win over Burlington in the semis. That came on the heels of a

26-1-1 showing in Tri-County league play.

Rangers head coach Jason O'Coin attributed much of his team's dominant record to stamina developed in practice.

"Luckily, we've had some really nice and long practice sessions this year," O'Coin said. "That's really helped us out a lot. We skate the boys hard and put them in a lot of different drills to build their competitiveness. We became a great third-period team."

The quality of MOHA's house league system also helped. O'Coin said he had plenty to choose from when forming the team last year.

"I knew who I was looking for," he said. "Our boys made a commitment to working hard all season long. We had excellent attendance from the boys at practices and games."

The Rangers also won the hometown Richard Bell tournament earlier this season and reached the finals at another competition.

Members of the team are Jordan Woods, Owen Hempel, Mitchell Adams, Tyler Bolender, Robbie Cleary, Michael Filice, Dylan Garner, Jacob Gawronski, Ryan Graham, Liam Griffin, Michael

Harper, Matthew Hodgson, Alex Lardis, Anthony O'Coin, Anthony Sestanovic, Dylan Sheridan and Jack Wilmott.

Peter Garner, Bill Bolender and Andrew Hempel also coach the team. Tanya Sheridan is the manager and Phil Gawronski is the trainer. The Rangers are sponsored by Superior Energy, Trojan Tire, Real Canadian Superstore and Plugged Piper drain service.

Atom

Defence has been one of the biggest keys to the atom AE Rangers' success this season.

So head coach Blair Mackey found it appropriate that one of the team's strongest defensive players, Kole Schledewitz, scored the goal that won Oakville an OMHA title Saturday.

"He's our defensive and penalty-killing specialist," Mackey said of Schledewitz, who scored the overtime winner in Oakville's 3-2 victory in Flamborough. "It was nice to see him get some offensive accolades."

Quinn Ligon and Holden Hewitt also scored

see Minor on p23