

Practise makes provincial champions

Oakville Venom under-13 bantam girls live up to No. 1 ranking at basketball provincials

Mike Hughes and Allen Iverson couldn't be further apart when it comes to one particular area of basketball philosophy.

Iverson, the NBA's most valuable player in 2001, is perhaps more famous for his anti-practice rant during a press conference 11 years ago. Hughes, on the other hand, points to practise as the biggest reason his Oakville Venom under-13 bantam girls' team won Ontario Basketball Association Division 1 gold last weekend in Windsor.

"There was no secret to our success. We probably practised and worked harder than any team out there," said Hughes, the Venom's coach. "Most teams at this level would practise two times a week, and we were going three times a week."

"I really believe at this age, there are no naturally-gifted superstars who are born that way, outside of your select players like Andrew Wiggins. The more you put into it, the more you get out of it."

Oakville won four of five games at the Ontario Cup provincial tournament, clinching the gold with a 40-28 victory over Blessed Sacrament-Bruzzese in the final. The Venom also defeated two-time defending champion Scarborough Blues-Breedy 38-33 in the semifinals after posting a 2-1 record in round-robin play, the lone loss coming by one point against Blessed Sacrament.

"Our girls just played with the little intangibles, diving for loose balls," said Hughes, whose team was the top seed at the tournament.

"They weren't going to lose."

Oakville's championship win marked the third time in the last five years that a Venom bantam girls' team has won Division 1 gold. This year, for the first time, the provincial bantam girls' champion earns a berth in the Division 1 AAU USA junior national championships.

Hughes, whose team was quite competitive in a loss to an elite Michigan squad earlier this season, has targeted a top-10 finish for his team at the tournament.

"That would be a great goal for us, competing against a country of 300 million people," he said.

Members of the OBA bantam girls' Division 1 champion Venom are Christina Morra, Tori Cramm, Aleyxa Gates-Julien, Aryn Sidhu, Jessica Angelini, Lauren Boers, Claudia Cuciani, Arianne Soriano, Freya Morrison, Peyton Hughes and Madison Trpcic.

Glen Julien and Brandon Trpcic also coach the team, and Giovanni Morra is the manager.

Other Venom results at provincials

The under-10 novice boys' Venom claimed Division 1 bronze at its recent provincial tournament in London. The Venom was denied a trip to the final with a 40-35 loss to top-seeded DC Bulldogs, who went on to rout the Scarborough Blues 45-23 in the title contest.

Another Venom entry, the under-12 major atom girls, dropped the Division 2 bronze-medal game 26-20 to the Huron Lakers March 24 in Mississauga.



The Oakville Venom won the Ontario Basketball Association under-13 bantam girls' Division 1 championship last weekend in Windsor. | photo submitted

Juvenile Venom boys start season with tourney win

The Oakville Venom under-17 juvenile boys' basketball team started the season in golden style, beating out seven other teams to win gold at a recent tournament in Cambridge.

The Venom won all its games at the tournament, though it needed a 25-6 third-quarter surge to overcome a halftime deficit in the final, going on to beat the host Cambridge Centaurs 77-52.

Members of the Oakville squad are Isaac Mununga, Eli Rodney, Keegan Borges, Jared Znak, Trenton Ford, Theo Will-Dryden, Liam



The Oakville Venom under-17 juvenile boys started their basketball season recently by winning a tournament in Cambridge. | photo submitted

Fitzpatrick, Keltrid Ramadani, Perry Wylosbicky, Thomas Evers and Sieg Will and Jason Rodney coach the team.



BSL Men's Over 50 Soccer Registration



The Burlington Soccer League (BSL) is holding registration sessions for the new Over 50 Division.

When? Saturday April 20th and Saturday April 27th 10:00am to 12:00pm

Where? The Queen's Head Pub at 400 Brant Street, Burlington, (just north of Lakeshore Rd.)

How much? Registration fee is \$250

What do you get? Full uniform, 19 games, 3 game officials and insurance coverage.

Who can play? Players born in 1963 or earlier are eligible to register.

Please bring a copy of your photo ID.

Games will be played in Burlington on Friday nights 7:00pm and 9:00pm on grass fields. The season is scheduled to start on Friday May 3rd and will run through to late September. Teams will be drafted from the pool of available players.

If you have any questions, please email Tony at Over50soccer@lsgm.ca

10K runners to pay tribute to Boston Marathon victims

Participants in Sunday's fifth annual Mercedes-Benz Oakville 10K will pay tribute to those killed and injured by the bombings at the Boston Marathon.

As part of opening ceremonies scheduled for 7:50 a.m. at Appleby College, Neil Diamond's Sweet Caroline — a song played in the middle of the eighth inning at all Boston Red Sox home games — will be played while the runners are in the corrals. Nick Jelinek, CEO of event organizer Influence Marketing, will then speak to the celebration of running. The 10K race will begin at approximately 8:15 a.m., after Jelinek concludes his speech.

Race-kit pickup begins today (Friday, 4-8 p.m.) and continues tomorrow (Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.) at New Balance's Oakville location at 1011 Upper Middle Rd. E. Event-day check-in at Appleby College will open Sunday at 6:45 a.m. and conclude at 7:45 a.m.

Following the start of the 10K run, the 5K run and walk will begin at 8:30 a.m. That event will include the Martin-Zandvliet Group High School Challenge, presented by National Bank Financial.

The 1K junior jog will start at 9:30 a.m. followed by the toddler trot at 9:45 a.m.

For more information, visit www.Mercedes10K.com.