

Four times a champion

The Oakville peewee AAA Rangers' entire season had come down to winning one final period, and it suited the Rangers just fine.

Tied with the Barrie Jr. Colts through two periods of Sunday's Ontario Minor Hockey Association championship game at Sixteen Mile Sports Complex, the Rangers scored three unanswered goals in the final frame to claim a 4-1 victory and their fourth OMHA title in the past five years.

"We have a lot of depth, and our boys had been in this situation before," said Oakville head coach Sean Carter. "They were veterans in these situations. We told them to stick to the game plan and not change anything we were doing, and we were pretty confident that we'd go on to win."

Cameron Tolnai, Jake Murray, Robbie Strachan and Zack Terry scored Oakville's goals in the final, with Davis Tolnai recording the victory in net.

During the round-robin portion of the OMHA tournament, Oakville defeated the Barrie Colts 4-2, Burlington Eagles 6-2 and Quinte Red Devils 2-0, and tied the Niagara North Stars 2-2.

Carter said continuity and camaraderie have keyed the Rangers' dominance of the OMHA over the past five years. An overtime loss to Niagara in the 2013 final — when Oakville dominated the game but could not solve a hot North Stars goaltender — is the Rangers' only 'blemish' during that time.

"It's the program that (former head coach) Jaan Luik put together," added Carter, who is in his second season behind the Rangers' bench. "There are no cliques, where some kids are better friends. They all seem to get along really well and buy into what we're teaching them. They have faith in us, and we have faith in them."

Also helping the Rangers to the OMHA title were Ethan Ritchie, Marcus Sang, Owen Sage, Nathan Ribau, Matthew Thompson, Owen Luik, Jamie Langill, Luke Evangelista, Ryan Brown, Tanner Kelly, Cameron Garvey and Gianmichael Vallorani. Aaron Jarc and Jaan Luik were assistant coaches.

— Jon Kuiperij



Cameron Tolnai (left) and Tanner Kelly celebrate after Tolnai scored to give the Oakville peewee AAA Rangers a 2-1 lead in Sunday's Ontario Minor Hockey Association championship game at Sixteen Mile Sports Complex. For a photo gallery from the game, visit bit.ly/1Bt4i3c.

| photo by Graham Paine — Oakville Beaver — @Halton_Photo

Freestyle skier claims silver at nationals

Robbie Anderson's bid to land a spot on the national moguls skiing team took another leap forward Sunday.

Fresh off a gold medal at the Canada Winter Games in February, the Oakville Trafalgar High School student won a silver medal in dual moguls at the national championships in Val Saint-Côme, Que.

"My strategy was to try and push the competitors to the top air to make them go big on their jump and cause them to have trouble the rest of the way down. It worked and I got a little lucky, too," Anderson said.

"I hope to eventually be named to the national team. It's a goal of mine and we'll see where that takes me."

After receiving a bye in the first round, Anderson earned wins in each of the next three in Sunday's dual competition, earning his spot in the final with a win over national team member Phillippe Marquis.

In the final, the 17-year-old was defeated by Marc-Antoine Gagnon, who won a bronze medal in dual moguls at this year's world championships and finished fourth at the Sochi Olympics.

Anderson, who also paddles for the Burloak Canoe Club, earned a score of 77.51 Saturday to finish eighth in the moguls competition.

— A longer version of this story can be viewed online at bit.ly/190iHMG

Minor peewee AAA Rangers' improbable OMHA win includes storybook ending

by Jon Kuiperij
Beaver Sports Editor

Throughout his lengthy tenure in minor hockey, Ian Taylor might not have seen a more improbable champion.

"Can I say I saw it? I don't want to say I ever doubted it," the Oakville minor peewee AAA Rangers coach, who is also the director of development programs for the Ontario Minor Hockey Association, said of his team's OMHA title potential.

"But we improved all year. It's been a process... All I can say is they played their best hockey of the year at the right time of the year."

The Rangers claimed OMHA supremacy in the most dramatic of fashions Sunday at Burlington's Central Arena, defeating the Richmond Hill Coyotes 2-1 on Joshua Bloom's overtime goal.

Bloom's winner came 4:09 into the first OT period as the forward, who led Oakville in scoring during the tournament, beat the Richmond Hill goaltender from a difficult angle.

“They played their best hockey of the year at the right time.”

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Ian Taylor
Minor peewee AAA Rangers coach

Blake Schriver scored the Rangers' other goal in the gold-medal game, goaltender Cedric Smith held the Coyotes scoreless until less than five minutes remained in the third period, and Oakville killed off a two-man disadvantage late in regulation.

"For us to kill off a 5-on-3 in the last few minutes was an incredible team effort," Taylor said. "We've said to our guys all year that the best thing about our team is the team. We all have to (contribute). That also makes it very satisfying, that all the players played a role."

Making Oakville's championship all the more unlikely was that: A) the Rangers were third in the South Central Triple A league during the regular season, going 19-11-6; B) the Rangers beat the SCTA champion Burlington Eagles during round-robin play at the OMHA tournament; and C) the Rangers wouldn't have even been invited to the OMHA championships had Burlington received an automatic entry as host, which opened up an SCTA spot for Oakville.

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