

SPORTS & LEISURE

Hockey season to end in Sweden for 'Drew'

By **EAMONN MAHER**
Staff Writer

Hockey season recently ended in disappointment for the Georgetown Jr. A Raiders, but their trainer is hopeful of finishing off the year on a winning note.

Local resident Andrew Groombridge was selected as one of the trainers for the Team Canada entry at the Three Nations under-20 men's tournament in Sweden April 14-18, with the hosts and Finland providing the opposition.

The 49-year-old Groombridge, the head trainer for the Raiders for the past 10 years, has participated in 18 world and 31 national championships altogether in lacrosse, hockey and fastpitch, but this is just his second overseas work assignment.

"It's going to be a big undertaking, because I'll pretty much be doing everything to do with training and equipment and we're going to have to pack a lot of stuff, but it will get done," Groombridge said.

"Hopefully doing this trip will open some doors for me."

Hall of Famer Dale Hawerchuk will coach Team Canada, which will be made up of OHA players from the A, B, C and D levels. A training camp is set to start April 9 at Orangeville's Teen Ranch, where the final roster of 22 skaters and two goalies will be determined.

Two members of this year's Raider



Georgetown's Andrew Groombridge is busy these days preparing for his trip to Sweden in a couple of weeks to serve as trainer for the Team Canada entry for the Three Nations Cup junior tournament. The longtime Jr. A Raiders' trainer will work with a team made up of top players from the Ontario Hockey Association and face Sweden and Finland in tourney action.

Photo courtesy www.ohahockey.org

squad, forwards Kyle Essery and Steve Perfetto, are also expected to play for the Canadian side. The OHA has committed to this event for the next three years.

Groombridge, who works full-time for the Sports Unlimited retail store in Brampton, is also the trainer for the Halton Hills Jr. B lacrosse team and

senior men's fastball's St. Thomas Centennials.

He got his start 36 years ago helping out with the St. Patrick's high school football squad in his native Sarnia and one of his first big assignments was to travel with the Sarnia midget hockey team in 1984 to a tournament in Germany. The sightseeing was great, he

said, even though the Canuck side was somewhat overmatched, losing one of its games to a Russian team 24-1.

"Fortunately I've done a lot of traveling through sports and I have an idea already what to take, and every day I put a few more notes in my pocket of things that we'll need. It's always better to bring too much stuff because you don't want to get caught when we're over there looking for things at the last minute."

'Drew' has been a member of national championship teams with the 1983-84 Point Edward Jr. B lacrosse team and in fastpitch in 2005-06 with St. Thomas, although some of his prized keepsakes are the 50-or-so photos he keeps in the Alcott Arena training room of athletes who have been on teams with Groombridge as trainer and moved on to higher levels of competition.

It's also not uncommon for a Georgetown youth team that's in the midst of a provincial championship series to get the pro treatment from Groombridge by getting to use the Raiders/Bulldogs dressing room for a big game.

"You're going seven days a week when the Raiders are in the playoffs and before one game is over, I have to already start getting ready for the next one, doing laundry, all that fun stuff," he added.

"But I enjoy being part of it. The guys at work give me a hard time because I tend to be a pretty quiet guy the day after a loss."

Minor midgets dodge elimination on way to OMHA title

By **EAMONN MAHER**
Staff Writer

On four occasions during their recent run to an Ontario Minor Hockey Association championship, the Georgetown Dental Clinic minor midget AA Raiders faced an elimination game, and all four times they skated to victory.

The last of those wins came last week when the visiting Raiders dominated and demoralized the host Barrie Colts 4-0 to clinch the OMHA minor midget AA title in the fifth-and-deciding contest.

"It's the first (OMHA title) for quite a few of the kids and the core of this team's been fighting for

years to get there. It's been so close a few times so it was great to see them win it," said head coach Craig Nicolucci.

"The bus ride home was surprisingly calm. We had done our hooting and hollering at the rink and then I think the boys were just in awe of what they accomplished."

The Raiders were nearly eliminated in the OMHA quarterfinals, trailing Orangeville 5-3 in the first-to-six-points series before turning in convincing 6-1 and 4-0 victories to move on.

A sweep of Brampton Youth followed in the semifinals and after beating Orangeville 2-0 in the opener of the championship series, Georgetown dropped

the next two and faced elimination in the best-of-5 matchup.

A narrow 4-3 Raider win at home set up the deciding game last Thursday at the Holly Community Centre in Barrie in front of about 500 spectators, which included a large Georgetown contingent.

Goaltender Dean Daquano earned two shutouts in the final series.

"It was a 100 per cent team effort because when one of our regular contributors weren't at their best, someone else stepped up and did the job," added Nicolucci, who was named the GMHA's senior coach of the year along with minor midget AE bench boss

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