



SPORTS



GMHA midget hockey tournament

Markham, Aeros claim puck titles



The Sunny Acre Farm midgets officially said goodbye to team member Jeremiah Fendley last Wednesday, retiring his jersey before playing their final game in the 26th annual Georgetown Minor Hockey Association tournament. Fendley, 17, died suddenly last month during high school physical education class. Here parents Bob and Paula Fendley pose with their son's sweater. Photo by Wendy Long.

The 26th version of the Georgetown Minor Hockey Association's annual midget tournament offered event director Brian James a crash course in on-the-job training.

James, in his first year as the tournament's director, was sailing right along with virtually a worry-free event through the competition's first six days. James's biggest worry up to that point was having a player pass out in the lobby after suffering a suspected concussion during a game. The player was taken to hospital, where he was treated and released.

However, that record was to be broken come last Saturday and Sunday.

On Saturday, James figured he had decided the four semifinalists in the AA class. Deciding on three of the teams was easy as those were the respective winners of the three divisions. The remaining position went to the second-place club with the best record.

When the tie-breaking formula was applied, tournament officials decided Thornhill would advance to the playoff round.

However, officials with the Sarnia entry disputed the formula, saying that Thornhill had the advantage based on having played more games because it was in a five-team division (the two others were made up of four teams).

Officials from the Ontario Minor Hockey Association and the host GMHA were called in, and after deliberation it was decided Sarnia would become the wild-card entry. That meant telephoning Thornhill team representatives and letting them in on the bad news.

Later Saturday, James was informed by Brooklin-Whitby, one of four teams competing in the AAA ranks, that there was a possible conflict with Sunday's playoff times. The Brooklin team had a league contest slated for 8 p.m., but if it had won its playoff game earlier Sunday morning, it would have to play for the AAA title at 6 p.m. But Brooklin team officials said they would work on getting the league game rescheduled.

Well, during the second-period intermission of the Brooklin-Guelph playoff game Sunday, which the Whitby team was leading handily, James was informed that the league game couldn't be rescheduled and that Brooklin would have to bow out of the tournament. So then the decision was made to have the Toronto Aeros-Central Ontario Wolves playoff contest stand as the AAA final.

The decision paid off handsomely as the Aeros claimed the championship with a trilling 5-3 overtime win.

The Sarnia team also made the most of its chance, defeating Brampton 4-1 before dropping a 6-2 decision to Markham in the AA championship. Markham advanced with a 9-2 semifinal victory over Humberview.

Georgetown was represented by the Sunny Acre Farms midgets, who finished the tournament with an 0-3 record. After losing 6-2 to Ajax and 10-6 to Etobicoke, the Raiders dropped a 9-2 decision to Humberview on Wednesday. Prior to the game, in a very classy move, the Sunny Acre Farms squad retired the No. 20 jersey of team member Jeremiah Fendley, who died suddenly last month during a high school physical education class.

James said he would welcome getting the opportunity to run the 1994 event, particularly after the lessons learned from this year's event. Ideally, he would like to see the tournament attract 24 teams, which would include eight in the AAA category, so as to make it easier to organize from a scheduling point of view.

A big problem James had this year was trying to attract teams to Georgetown during a time when a host of other tournaments were underway. That, combined with many teams deciding not to travel during the Christmas break for financial reasons, made it difficult to get the 17 teams which did take part.

Having the tournament start in the New Year, which had been the norm excluding the past couple of years, would also prevent the Georgetown event from having to compete against other tournaments.

"Getting 24 teams would take care of the problem of having a wild-card team," James said. "Even if we have to have the wild-card team next year, we'll have to have a better formula than we did this year."

After the respective championships were decided, the top performers in each classification were honored. Robert Koh of the Toronto Aeros was voted the AAA MVP, with Chris McCarthy of the Central Ontario squad being named the top goaltender.

Markham's Miguel Torres was the AA MVP, with teammate Shawn Fryberg being named the top goaltender. Sarnia's Jason Toenders was the winner of the Lady Byng Trophy.

Raiders hopeful about playoffs

The New Year is here, and with it comes a renewed optimism for the Georgetown Chrysler Raiders.

For even though the Central Ontario Junior Hockey League team is riding a 27-game winless streak, a playoff berth still remains on the horizon. The Raiders could take a giant step towards a post-season berth Saturday with a win over Royal York.

Currently the Rangers hold down the sixth and final playoff spot in the East Division, three points ahead of the seventh-place Raiders. Georgetown opens 1993 in Brampton on Thursday night, and is in Caledon on Sunday to complete the busy first week back.

"It's a big game for us because we could invariably be one point out of sixth or five," Ford said. "But, really, we can't put a lot of emphasis on it because we've still got a lot of steps to go."

"The first one will be putting together some wins and getting ahead of Royal York."

"As bad as it has been, that (still being in playoff contention) has been the salvation. This can be salvaged with some wins. That makes every game important."

Ford is still looking for his first win since taking over the Raiders early last month after coach Charlie Hanman and assistant Bert Osborne both stepped down, feeling a change was needed. Although Ford is

0-6-1, the club's play leaves him encouraged. Only one of those defeats has been by more than three goals, and Georgetown has scored 35 goals since Ford took over.

The only problem is, the Raiders have given up 50 goals. However, Ford isn't about to point the finger of blame at anyone in particular.

"We've given up too many goals, that's for sure," he said. "There have been times when our goalies have given up a soft goal, but I've also seen times when guys have been allowed to stand in front and get three and four shots on goal before scoring."

Having been without right-winger Bryan Gendron hasn't helped either, Ford said. Gendron, who returned to the Raiders earlier this year after three-plus seasons in the Ontario Hockey League, has been out of action for the past four games after receiving an 11-game suspension for head butting and molesting an official in a contest against Caledon.

Ford figures with Gendron in the lineup, the Raiders could've possibly turned a 4-4 tie with Burlington and close losses to Royal York, Milton and Mississauga into wins.

"You don't want to put the pressure all on one guy's shoulders, but Bryan has a lot of experience and I

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