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Orton player on Canada's team

BY MAGGIE PETRUSHEVSKY
The New Tanner

Bradley Bowden of Orton will be one of the wingers when Team Canada's sledge hockey team faces off against the world at Salt Lake City in March.

The 16-year-old was born with sacriel agenisis, a spinal defect which confines him to a wheelchair.

The first 10 years of his life offered him few recreational opportunities. In the last six, he has filled that void by playing wheelchair basketball, then sledge hockey and finally wheelchair golf.

Over the last 4.5 years he has played sledge hockey with the KW Sidwinders and was one of a province-wide group who showed up for a demonstration tournament at the Acton arena in September.

Earlier this fall a call went out seeking new players to try out for the national sledge hockey team. Organizers felt the existing team members were getting a bit old and there was a need to prepare some new players to take their places when they were ready to retire, Bowden was told.

Bowden was one of three from the KW team who went to Ottawa in October to try out for the 15 spots on the national team. He and Billy Bridges of Guelph made that team and another KW team member, from Burlington, has been chosen as an alternate.

National team practices are held in Ottawa about once a month, Bowden says. Although Sweden and Norway are two of the world's strongest teams, the Canadian team is favoured to bring back a medal from the World Championships at Salt Lake City in March. They will also be the Canadian Sledge Hockey team for the 2002 Olympics which is also set in Salt Lake City, Utah.

The rules for sledge hockey are basically the same as for regular hockey, Bowden says. However players use modified hockey sticks to propel themselves around the ice by arm strength. The short sticks have a blade on one end for puck control and double figure skating picks on the other to dig into the ice for propulsion. In place of skates the players ride on sleds equipped with double skate blades on the bottom.

A NATIONAL REP: Bradley Bowden will be one of Canada's national sledge hockey team at the World Championships this year and at the 2002 Olympics. - Maggie Petrushevsky photo

Minor Novices edge Elora

The Acton Minor Novice Tanners ended the year with a 5-3 over Erin/Hillsburgh. Dylan Creasey had a pair of goals and Brandyn McCarthy, Bradley Kri and Tyler Bandy had singles. Assists went to Colton Burgan (2), Taylor McNabb and McCarthy.

Gordie McKeon had a pair of goals, Creasey had a single as Acton downed Elora in an away game last Sunday. Billy Burgan and Colton Burgan and McCarthy had assists.

Visiting Fergus edged Acton 2-1 last Saturday in a fast-paced game that could have gone either way. McKeon scored for Acton with help McCarthy.

The Minor Novice squad is hosting a holiday tournament today. The Atom tournament begins at 8 a.m. tomorrow morning.

Acton PeeWees were ousted from Christmas tourney

A 5-3 loss to Oakridges knocked the Acton Minor Peewee Tanners out of the consolation final at the Acton rep. league's annual Christmas tournament on Monday. Eight teams with 120 players took to the ice in the 7th annual event that drew approximately 1,000 people to town.

A flukey goal after three minutes of overtime gave St. Marys a 1-0 win in game one. The scorer tipped over his skate lace, got the puck and slipped it into the net.

Neil Armstrong split the defence to score his second goal of the game with 1:05 on the clock to give Acton a 3-2 win over Oro in game two. Kyle Marshall and Jim Berry helped on Armstrong's first goal at 4:40 of the second period. Kyle McDonald made it 2-1 Acton with help from Nick Ridler and a nice pass from Brady Masters allowed Armstrong to score the winner.

In the consolation final, Acton was down 4-0 mid-way through the second period and managed to battle back with singles from Kyle McDonald, Karl Hjelholt and Ches Zaborowski. Assists went to Armstrong, Elliott Shrive, Nick Ridler and Berry.

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