

Sports & Leisure

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Team throws support behind cancer survivor

Minor peewees think pink

The teasing and double-takes stop not long after the pre-game warm-up is over. Opponents of the Georgetown minor peewee AA Raiders who haven't seen an entire group of 11-year-old boys wearing pink skate laces before usually get tuned in fairly quickly.

"We don't care what people think about the pink," said goalie Dean Daquano, whose mother Joanne has been battling cancer since 1999.

"Our nickname is The Pink Blur," quipped teammate Tyler Topham, when asked about his first-place Raiders.

Team manager Ian McGucken thought up the idea of the pink laces as a show of support for 40-year-old Joanne Daquano, who recently underwent hip-replacement surgery after two more cancer spots were diagnosed. When McGucken discovered that it would take several weeks to order that colour of laces, he decided to dye a white set instead.

"Our kids get lots of comments at first from other teams because they don't know the situation," said head coach Ray Wallace. "But once we tell one of the other team's parents or one of their kids what the laces are for, they all think it's a great gesture."

Instead of purchasing Christmas presents for each other this past year, team members decided to buy gifts for Daquano, who was in hospital at the time suffering from the agonizing pain of the deteriorating hip joint. The squad has also slightly altered the traditional Georgetown Raider pre-game cheer to demonstrate their enthusiasm.

"We are the Raiders and we wear pink. We are the best team in this rink."

A Grade 7-8 teacher at St. Catherine of Alexandria School in Georgetown, Daquano recently spoke to the players in the change room about her illness, explaining how the breast cancer that she was first found to have back in May 1999

can affect a family.

"I did it just to give them some awareness about the disease," Daquano said last week in the stands prior to the team's first playoff game. "When I was in a wheelchair, having limited ability, they saw how (Joanne's husband Mike, along with children Dylan, Dean and Darcy) had to pitch in a little more with everything at home. You can see there's a change in the team's attitude now. There is more to life than hockey. You never know what can happen to your teammate."

After winning a Chatham holiday tournament, there was talk amongst the minor peewee Raiders that the laces possessed some sort of magical powers—making one skate faster and score

more goals—something you couldn't test positive for at the Olympics.

The tourney victory qualified Georgetown for the North American Silver Stick championships in Newmarket last month, and the Raiders posted impressive wins over London and Michigan to start things off. A win against an Indianapolis team in the final preliminary-round match would have assured a place in the playoff semi-finals for the very confident Raiders, but alas, for the first time, the pink laces didn't come through in a 9-2 Georgetown loss.

The minor peewee Raiders finished in top spot in the Tri-County league with a 19-5-4 record and trail Brampton 1-0 in their second-round Ontario Minor Hockey Association playoff series.

As for Daquano, she has set a goal of returning to the classroom to teach in September.

"We'll see how I'm feeling. We've been thrown so many curve balls that I don't say that I'm going to do something because you never know what's going to happen."

—By Eamonn Maher, staff writer

'We are the Raiders and we wear pink. We are the best team in this rink.'

— Pre-game cheer of minor peewee AA Raiders



In a show of support for the mother of one of their teammates, members of the Georgetown minor peewee AA Raiders are wearing pink skate laces during their run through the OMHA playdowns. Joanne Daquano (centre of photo) was diagnosed with breast cancer seven years ago and is recovering from another bout with the disease. Pictured above, surrounding Daquano, beginning in the forefront, moving clockwise, are: Conor McGucken, Derek Thomas, Mark Hirst, Dean Daquano, Tyler Topham, Scott Garvie, Paul Chiapetta, Adam Anderson.

Photo by Eamonn Maher

Goodtimers almost golden on pond

Two Georgetown teams made it to the quarter-finals of the inaugural Canadian Pond Hockey Championships last weekend in Huntsville before bowing out to the squads that ended up meeting for the men's championship. The Georgetown Goodtimers put in a double entry for the 110-team tournament, and after winning several games each, both sides were knocked out Sunday afternoon on adjacent rinks.

Weather proved to be a challenge as well, with spring-like conditions on Friday and Saturday, followed by snow squalls and 60 km/h winds for championship Sunday. Still, the locals enjoyed the experience and plan on entering four teams for next year's tournament.

The Real Goodtimers, consisting of Dave Welburn, Lanny McCabe, Pete Mashinter, Jay Campbell and Mark David, lost in the quarters to the eventual-champion Team Rink Rake Grey Beards from Whitby. The Goodtimers 2nd String, made up of Luc Wood, Brad Davidson, Shane Thompson, Jim Kavanagh and Curtis Hoogendan, were eliminated with a 19-5 defeat to the runner-up Barrie Bruins.

Sign-up session Saturday for roller hockey

The Georgetown Roller Hockey League will hold registration for its 10th season this weekend with divisions for players seven years to adults played on Wednesday nights from April to July.

The registration will be held on Saturday,

Feb. 4 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Mold-Masters SportsPlex.

Cost to register is \$185 per player (+GST).

For more info call Paul Mintha at 905-259-4514 or e-mail pmintha@oihl.com, or visit the Website www.oihl.com.

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