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Juveniles show offensive prowess in home opening victory Saturday

By MURRAY TOWNSEND
Special to The Champion

It had been a while since the Milton juveniles won a home game. Over 10 years, in fact. All that changed Saturday evening when the team outdistanced Pickering 8-6 at Memorial Arena.

It was a night to remember the past. A banner was placed on the arena wall recalling Milton's last juvenile team, who were all-Ontario AAA finalists in 1988-89.

The coach of that team, Barry Elliot, was on hand to drop the first puck, and assisting the current coach, John Arnold, was Joe Auger, who coached the juveniles from 1968 to 1980.

Arnold was pleased to be able to connect the past with the present, and happy that juvenile hockey is back in Milton. "It was a special night just to get it going again."

On the ice, Ricky Nadalin had the first shot and first scoring chance, Josh Arnold made the first save in net, Rod Heinz — one of two players from Georgetown —

made the first great defensive play breaking up a 3-on-1, Cory Leigh had the first good hit, and the second, Matt Ventura had the first penalty when he tried to do an unauthorized makeover on a Pickering player, Jordan Jeans scored the first goal with a slapshot from the point after a drop pass from Leigh, who got the first assist and captain Steve Szafer had the first three arguments with a referee, as well as the first hat-trick.

It was hardly a clinic in defensive hockey, as the score ricocheted all night long. Milton was missing three players — including two top defensemen — and had a tendency to give up odd-man rushes which accounted for most of Pickering's goals.

But they more than made up for it in the offensive zone, where the players had plenty of opportunity to display the skills they learned growing up in the Milton and Halton minor hockey systems. Szafer had three goals, with single markers going to

Jeans, Ventura, Jed Cosby, Jeff Mitchel and Derek Birnie.

Mitchell got the winner with just 3:07 remaining in the game, when he tucked one in under the crossbar, while Birnie intercepted a pass in the last minute while Milton was shorthanded and took it in alone for the empty net insurance marker.

The juveniles, whose home games are Saturday nights at 8:30, play an entertaining wide-open brand of hockey.

It's been a while, maybe 10 years, since a Milton minor hockey team has been able to put together a group of players with such a high level of skating, passing, shooting and scoring ability.

Most importantly, it provides a place for local players to continue playing after they are 18-years-old.

"There are too many good hockey players here to give up the game so early," noted Arnold.

Judging by their first home game, there's little doubt about that.

AA Minor peewees drop two of three

Milton's AA minor peewees have had a bit of a rough ride lately — winning just one of three games.

Their lone victory came Saturday when they shaded Orangeville 3-2.

Alex Berndt provided the heroics with under a minute remaining in the final frame, sinking the game winning with help from set-up man Kyle Fokma.

Berndt scored goal number one as well while also lighting the lamp was Jake Demarsh.

Before that the Herman Miller Winterhawks were edged 8-7 by Burlington and toppled 5-2 by Flamborough.

Berndt tallied twice against Flamborough and posted a single marker

versus Burlington, whose game winner came with just over two minutes left to play.

Also scoring in the offensive slugfest were Demarsh with two and Jeremy Brown, Blake Frittenburg, Luc Hartwick and Ashley Rutz with singles.










Graham Sharp stood as well with four assists.

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