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'AA' midgets win OMHA championship

Burrell's timely hat-trick seals up title for 'Hawks

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
The Champion

Mission accomplished!

Fueled by a 'that's one to tell the grandchildren' hat-trick from Kyle Burrell, Milton's AA midgets cleared the final hurdle to the OMHA title in Barrie Tuesday night — downing the Flyers 3-1 to take the best-of-seven championship series in five games.

"It's the best feeling in the world," said a euphoric Burrell, who'd been having trouble finding his scoring touch in recent weeks after a productive regular season and start to the playoffs. "I tried something different tonight, going upstairs like everyone kept telling me, and it seemed to work. This is just awesome."

Burrell capitalized on a major powerplay early in the second period and then salted the game away with two more top-shelf deposits in the last nine minutes.

Sharing the spotlight with another red-hot performance between the pipes was Kyle Goertz. Part of the league's premier tandem, he delivered some exceptional glove work through the initial stages of play and denied the hosts at every turn down the stretch.

Remarked head coach Arnie Parcels, "Kyle and Jason (Strong) really carried us through on those nights when we struggled to bury the biscuit."

The Milton Toyota Winterhawks' 20th playoff win gave Parcels his second OMHA championship with the local midgets in six years, after unsuccessful bids during two previous trips to the finals.

This year's contingent, he admitted, doesn't have quite the natural talent of its 1997 counterpart — but more than made up for it with sheer desire.

"They're both championship teams, but it's like comparing the Edmonton Oilers to the New Jersey Devils," Parcels explained, brandishing a celebratory cigar while surrounded by well-wishers young and old. "This team went out and earned it with every single shift."

Chris Coates was perhaps the most inspiring example of that in Barrie Tuesday. After taking a vicious knee-on-knee that sent him hobbling to the dressing room before second intermission, the diminutive assistant captain gutted his way back into the lineup and made good on his return by setting up the game winner.

"I just got it to Kyle (Burrell) and he did the rest," said Coates. "I thought I'd blown out my knee. It hurt (for third period) but I wasn't going to leave a game like this."

Much like during their semifinal series-clinching victory over Stoney Creek, Milton relied heavily on grit and goaltending through a lengthy scoring drought. But a lack of production early on didn't seem to faze the eventual champs.

Stressed Julian Ricci, "It doesn't matter if you win by one goal or 10. Winning is winning."



Milton's AA midgets and fans celebrate Tuesday's OMHA title win in Barrie.

Photos by **STEVE LeBLANC**

Enjoying a strong traveling fan base at the Allandale Recreation Centre, Milton was sturdy in the defensive zone and killed off a couple of late penalties to pull out the win.

The lone goal against them came on a two-man advantage in the closing moments of period two.

James McIntosh set up Burrell's first and final markers while single helpers went to Erick Lizon, Adam Rutz and Daryl Tielemans — whose kid brother David was again in the lineup filling in for a suspended Derek Blanchard.

Making up the rest of the championship squad are captain Connor Sweeney, Lee Frittenburg, Mark Galick, Scott McLaughlin, Ryan Pilarczyk, Chris Strank, Paul Szafer, Brett Turner and Michael Winiarz.

The Winterhawks' OMHA triumph earns them passage to the five-team All-Ontario finals in Sudbury April 11 to 13.



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