



SPORTS

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

FRIDAY OCTOBER 31, 2003



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

A piece of the Rock

Milton's Josh Arnold is all smiles after being picked up by the Toronto Rock in Saturday's National Lacrosse League entry draft. The 21-year-old goaltender was taken in the eighth round, 79th overall. Both surprised and pleased to be drafted, Arnold played the last two seasons with the hometown Jr. B Mavericks before closing out his junior career with the Jr. A Mississauga Tomahawks in July.

Beaver Tournament set for a solid return

Holiday bash back up to six divisions

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
The Champion

Milton's holiday hockey bash is up from the ashes once again.

While canceled two of the last four years, the AA Beaver Tournament will celebrate its 28th installment — mainly at the new twin arenas — from December 27 to 30.

And early indications suggest the Christmas break showcase could enjoy its greatest overall participation in recent memory.

"Things are going very well. Response has been really good," said tournament chair Ron Pullman.

Added Milton Minor Hockey Association President Joe Bruno, "It's great to see the tournament back on."

Advertised on the OMHA Web site a little earlier than in previous years, the Beaver Tournament is back up to its original six divisions, with the minor midgets as a surprising entry to this fold.

Explained Pullman, "We weren't even planning to have the minor midgets in, but there's not many tournaments at that level, so it could be our biggest division — possibly as many as eight teams."

So far six minor midget squads are committed, which matches registration for the tyke loop. There's five entries signed on for minor peewee competition, while the novices, minor atoms and minor bantams have four apiece.

The Beaver Tournament has suffered from a lack of volunteer support over the years as well, although that doesn't appear to be a problem this time around.

"It's not an issue this year," noted Pullman. "We've got students coming in to do their community service for school and people are phoning me wanting to help out. The response has been excellent."

In addition to the actual games, the 2003 tournament will feature an all-inclusive skills competition — which will see all players participating rather than just the usual handful from each team.

"We've booked extra ice for this. Some of them are more fun than skill, but it's (all-inclusive showcase) better than having just five or six players representing each team and the rest sitting on the sidelines and not competing."

The four-day showcase will also include a lobby-based shooting challenge provided by the Canadian Tire Events Team, while Gatorade will act as another chief sponsor, with refreshments for all youngsters.

Although the Beaver's revival is certainly cause for celebration, there's still concern that a multi-level tournament of

this type just can't last — that truly ensuring its survival requires scaling back to a more appealing two or three-division format.

But Pullman isn't convinced of this, particularly after this year's response.

"Maybe we'll have to re-evaluate it (format) in the future, but right now I don't think that's the way to go," he

said. "Preserving the history of the tournament was a good move, and I think the numbers show that."

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MILTON
ICEHAWKS

**TONIGHT'S
TICKET**

**IceHawks (11-7)
vs. Buffalo (5-13-2)**

Game time: 7:30 p.m. at Memorial
Last meeting: Milton won 7-2 in Buffalo

Who to watch: Somewhat stifled by recent line tinkering, veteran forward Wes Clark is due for a bust-out performance. Ryan Angelow and Jonathan Ornelas should be able to do some stats padding as well.

The skinny: Milton whipped up on Buffalo the last two times and — barring a complete collapse — should have no problem doing so again.

Champion's pick: Milton by five.

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