

Sports

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Photos by GRAHAM PAINE



✓ Take that!

Winterhawk Daryl Brinke takes an Erin opponent into the boards while (above) Ryan Bauer celebrates a second-period goal during additional entry bantam Tri County championship play at John Tonelli Sports Centre Saturday afternoon. Milton dropped the game 3-2 and went on to lose 4-2 in Erin Sunday — thus dropping the best-of-five series three-games-to-one. Kevin Marshall was rock solid between the pipes in both games, while Jeff Thompson potted both goals Sunday. Saturday's scoring was done by Brinke and season-long scoring standout Michael Brown — who along with Craig Howse drew two assists in Sunday's series clincher. Milton's AE bantams went 6-1 in round-robin play to reach the finals.

Winterhawk tykes golden

Tri County title drive capped in dramatic style

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
The Champion

Milton's smallest rep hockey players have put the finishing touches on the biggest rags to riches story of the season.

The final chapter was written at Teen Ranch Sunday afternoon, when the tyke Winterhawks shaded host Caledon 2-1 to solidify Tri County gold.

Having won just twice throughout the regular season, the local rink rats weren't exactly expected to have much playoff prosperity — much less come out on top.

But fortified team play resulted in a 7-0-3 round-robin campaign. From there, a nifty mix of clutch goaltending and goal scoring were enough to see the championship drive through to fruition.

Austin Dezeeuw provided the title-clinching heroics, scoring with just three minutes remaining to give Milton a three-games-to-one victory.

Matthew Gooding and Matthew Lenahan assisted on the golden goal — just the eighth overall in a drama-rich series that saw all four tilts decided by a single goal.

Nicholas Hoffman would share the game-four spotlight with all-around sharp play and an incredible glove save in the third period, while season-long scoring leader Brett Everson potted a second-period equalizer — with help from Rourke Ferguson and Jacob Quinn.

Offering just as much excitement — if not more — at Milton Sports Centre Friday evening, the Winterhawks put Caledon on the proverbial chopping block with a 1-0 overtime triumph.

The combatants appeared headed for a scoreless stalemate when Ben Preisner banged in Quinn's doorstep leftovers with about two minutes remaining in sudden death.

Ferguson also assisted on the night's lone marker, while Preisner and Everson moved the puck well all game.

Ryan McLaughlin made a big shot block in the third to aid Connor Hallyburton — whose flawless performance was highlighted by a pair of huge pad saves down the stretch. Overall, he made a dozen saves to outduel his capable counterpart.

Making up the rest of the championship team are Aidan Atkinson, Andrew Dodson, Liam Duplantis, Robert James, Liam McNabb, Zak Smith and Adam Wilson. So far the tykes are Milton's only team to win Tri County gold this year.



Bantams keep Tri County title hopes alive with hard-fought tie

Winterhawks battle through short bench to prolong series

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
The Champion

Milton's AA major bantams have lived to fight another day.

Erasing three one-goal deficits and battling through late-game fatigue at Memorial Arena Thursday night, the Winterhawks gutted out a much-needed tie with the Burlington Eagles.

The 3-3 draw pushed the now four-point Tri County championship series to a third game, which goes tonight at Burlington's Appleby Arena at 7:45 p.m.

Hopes for avoiding the sweep didn't look too promising for much of the night, as the hosts fell behind twice in the first six minutes and then had five players ejected during a second-period line brawl.

Down to eight skaters against Burlington's 12, the Winterhawks looked to be on their way out, especially after surrendering another goal just minutes after the roughhousing.

However, Milton's remaining players would find the necessary reserves to even

"The guys who were left beared down and really came through."

JOHN NADALIN

things up one more time — with a third-period blueline bullet through heavy traffic by Brent Trull — and survive sudden death.

Given the fact that the Winterhawks finished with only two natural defencemen and couldn't make a wholesale line change for more than 30 minutes without a flood break, the game two stalemate could certainly be viewed as a moral victory.

"The guys who were left beared down and really came through," said head coach John Nadalin, whose troops remain in the hunt for a second straight Tri County title — having won last year as minor bantams with a perfect 13-0 campaign.

Joey DeAthe turned back 28 shots overall and a handful through the extra session. He was particularly effective in the second period, stopping 12 of 13 shots to keep Burlington from putting things out of reach.

Offensively, Mac Fillman led with a pair of assists — helping set up a wide-angle screen shot by Luc Hartwick and a power-play doorstep deposit by captain Daniel Kearns.

Drawing single helpers were Jon Monk and Jeff Lynch.

Now trailing three-points-to-one, the Winterhawks will be back to near full strength for tonight's must-win clash at Appleby. If victorious, they'll host a fourth and deciding tilt tomorrow at Milton Sports Centre at 8 p.m.

Optimist tourney beefed up

The Optimist Tournament is back — bigger and better than ever.

Set to begin Thursday evening at Milton Sports Centre, the additional entry rep hockey bash has been beefed up to 47 teams — with competition in every division from novice to midget.

"I actually would have wanted more teams, but we couldn't get any more ice," said chairman Martin Larkin, who took over the organizing reigns after coaching in the tournament for the past four years. "Hopefully next year we can make it even bigger. I'd like to see it up to eight teams in each

group."

Teams from as far away as Georgian Bay's Manitoulin Island and Belle River will vye for division bragging rights from Thursday to Sunday, when a full slate of championship games will be contested at MSC.

John Tonelli Sports Centre will also be used for round-robin tilts on Friday.

Last year marked Milton's most successful showing in recent memory at its season-ending tournament, with the tykes, bantams and midgets all securing Optimist gold.