

Minor midgets fall short of Beaver title

Championship loss at holiday showcase an all-too-familiar finish for head coach Nadalin

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
The Champion

History has a way of repeating itself, and not always to one's liking.

Such was the case for John Nadalin Thursday afternoon at Milton Sports Centre, where as a second-year head coach his minor midget Winterhawks lost by the narrowest of margins to Stoney Creek in the 'AA' GoodLife Fitness Beaver Tournament finals.

The 6-5 heart-breaker reeked of unwelcomed déjà vu.

It was 10 years earlier to the day — almost to the exact hour — that as a standout defenceman with the minor bantam Winterhawks, Nadalin lost the holiday showcase championship to Humber Valley.



"Yeah, this one's just as tough, all right."

JOHN NADALIN

Providing an all-too-similar scenario to the 1994 defeat, his minor midgets won four straight games en route to being vanquished in the title match.

Needless to say, high stakes losses like these — in any capacity — don't get any easier to swallow.

"Yeah, this one's just as tough, all right," said Nadalin, moments after having his championship hopes cut short.

Representing the hosts' only real chance for Beaver Tournament glory this time around, the minor midgets swept round-robin competition and then prevailed 2-1 in the semifinals — squeaking by Flamborough Thursday morning in an edge-of-your-seat overtime thriller that went down to two-on-two play.

Jon Monk did some good work down low and got it out to Luc Hartwick, who buried a backhand to end what was without question the most exciting game of the tournament. Nic Nevins stood tall between the pipes to help put Milton in the finals.

But the Winterhawks had little left defensively for Stoney Creek, giving up their zone much too easily through the first two periods. And while they reclaimed the lead early in the second on two quick goals by Mike Vipond and Jeff Lynch, there was just no building on that turnaround.

Remarked Nadalin, "I thought we had it after those goals, we were starting to roll. But we just couldn't finish it off, and honestly we didn't bring our 'A' game for this one."

However, the minor midgets' bench boss sang a much different tune when assessing his team's overall Beaver Tournament performance — particularly since their 4-1 campaign came on the heels of a shaky regular season stretch and subsequent week-long layoff for Christmas.

"We definitely stepped it up a notch," noted Nadalin, who offered high praise to Monk, who was just back from a wrist injury and came through with both exceptional defense and three assists.

Mac Fillman drew within a goal inside the last two minutes to make the finals a little more interesting, while captain Daniel Kearns led with a goal and two helpers. Also lighting the lamp was Mike Hannah.



Overall, Hartwick enjoyed the lion's share of the scoring pie for the minor midgets with four goals and three assists.

The Winterhawks were the only perfect team in round robin play, scoring three narrow wins and giving up just five goals after kicking things off with a 2-0 shutout of Mississauga.

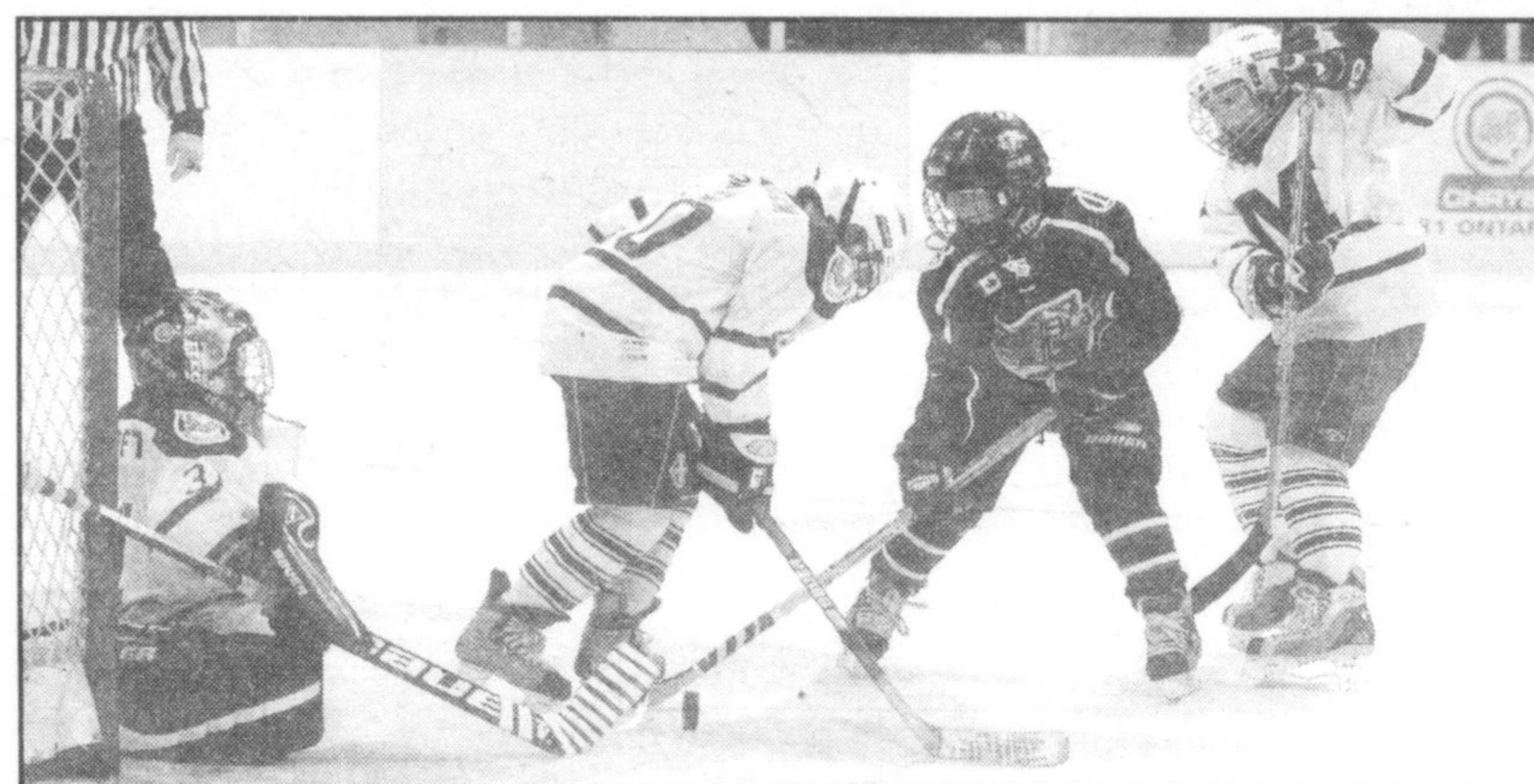
Milton's other four host teams — the tykes, novices, minor atoms and minor bantams — all had a rough ride at last week's tournament. None could muster a single round-robin victory, and had to settle for one tie apiece.

Scoring was certainly a problem for the Winterhawks. Of the four teams' combined 10 losses, nine came with two goals or less for the hometown side.

In other championship play, Georgetown's tykes destroyed Brampton 10-1, the Welland novices nipped Caledon 4-3, Georgina doubled up Mississauga 6-3 for the minor atom title and Brampton crushed Peterborough 7-0 for minor bantam bragging rights.



Winterhawk Colin Maltby (above and above inset) gets by a Georgina defender while goaltender Mack Mindenhall (below) guards his cage as two teammates battle with a Georgina opponent during minor atom play at the Beaver Tournament Wednesday afternoon.



Photos by GRAHAM PAINE

Explosive end to '04 for Haydar

Darren Haydar sure knows how to end a calendar year in style.

Milton's AHL veteran capped 2004 with half-a-dozen points in his Milwaukee Admirals' last two games — including four during Wednesday's 4-1 victory in Houston.

The 25-year-old right winger assisted on two goals by Andrew Hutchinson and one by Dan Hamhuis before scoring himself with just a single tick of the clock remaining in the second.

The following night against the visiting Hamilton Bulldogs, Haydar set up a second-period equalizer by Brad Tiley and then deposited a behind-the-net bank shot 3:09 in the third to give Milwaukee a 3-2 win. It was his second game winner of the season and third goal in as many games.

The recent surge pushed him to second in Admirals' scoring with 11 goals and 16 assists in 29 games. It also helped Milwaukee climb back to first in the West Division.



Darren Haydar

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January 17, 2005

January 17, 2005

February 9, 2005

Registration

Milton Canadian Tire Store
Steeles and James Snow Pkwy.
Jan. 11 & 12, 2005
6 to 10 pm

Georgetown MarketPlace Mall
280 Guelph St., Georgetown
Jan. 13 & 14, 2005
7 to 9 pm

AE2 atoms extend winning streak to 6

And the wins just keep on coming.

Continuing a late-season tear Sunday afternoon, Milton's AE2 atoms delivered their sixth straight victory — this time against top-ranked Fergus.

The 3-1 decision pushed the 14-7-2 Winterhawks into second place with just one game remaining in regular-season play. Milton has given up just two goals in its last six outings, thanks in part to topnotch cage work by Justin Davidson and Tristan Kivac — who was between the pipes Sunday.

The Winterhawks scored two quick goals in the first and rode that early lead the rest of the way with a fundamentally-sound performance.

Zach Wadham tallied twice, while Andrew Smith also stood out with a goal and an assist. Drawing two helpers was Ryan Tanason, with Zachery Boyes and Christian Pinheiro picking up one apiece.

Sunday marked the local AE2 atoms' second straight 3-1 victory after an impressive streak of consecutive shutouts in mid-December.