

# Heartbreakers for hockey teams

## Major novices, minor bantams get close in OMHA finals

By **STEVE LeBLANC**  
Special to The Champion

Milton minor hockey fans suffered through a double dose of heartache last Sunday at Memorial Arena.

Unlike in horseshoes and hand grenades, close didn't count for either the Wallace Pontiac major novices or the Spectrum Airways minor bantams — who each came within a hair's width of winning their respective Ontario Minor Hockey Association (OMHA) championship series.

Home ice advantage didn't quite spell success however, as both lost in the final game of their best-of-five showdowns.

Having pulled off a 3-2 overtime victory to force a final go-around, Don Hearn's major novices couldn't buy themselves a goal down the stretch Sunday and fell 3-1 to Belleville.

The highly physical, well officiated contest featured about as many clean checks as in a pee-wee or bantam game. Unfortunately for local spectators, it didn't include as much scoring for the home team.

"We had a number of quality scoring opportunities in the third, but just couldn't sink one."

"The guys played well however, and it was a hard fought game with great refereeing," said Hearn.

Belleville's insurance marker came inside the last five minutes of the third, on the powerplay. The Winterhawks tied it up early in the second before relinquishing the game-winner.

Scoring Milton's lone tally was Clayton Holman while Michael Binnington worked the cage.

Elgin Reid notched the overtime winner in game four. Three of the five games were decided in an extra frame.

Making up the rest of this year's crew were Alex Berndt, Nick Cheeseman, Matt Chuchmach, Scott Collard, James Connor, Dave Dimeo, Nathan Grenke, Kyle Hearn, Robbie Hunt, Jeff Kitchen, Kevin Parker, Chris Pedulla and coaching staff members Paul Kitchen, Phil Dimeo and Tony Pedulla.

An even close tilt saw the minor bantams — led by skipper Darrin Rousselle — draw within one of the Peterborough Petes in the final 30 seconds of their game five battle.

That however, was the extent of their output in a 4-3 loss and a comeback series triumph for the visitors, who fought off elimination with a 5-4 decision the previous Sunday in Georgetown.

"With Mike Austen and Jacob Vanderbreggen injured and Shawn McConnell and Bren Silk suspended, we were down to two lines and fatigue did start to show through somewhat near the end," Rousselle explained. "However, they turned in a strong team effort and I'm real-

ly proud of them all."

Milton managed to erase a two-goal deficit in the second period before Peterborough went ahead for the final time. One of the Petes' goals came with just two seconds remaining in the opening frame.

Kris Beal and Jarrett Konkle led the attack with a goal and an assist each. Beal put the 'Hawks on the scoreboard early in the second while Konkle finished out his team's scoring for the season.

Matt Craig also tallied in their final outing while Derek Mewhinney drew a pair of

helpers. Craig MacDonald meanwhile, posted a single assist and Chris Kovachik was steady between the pipes.

Working the net in game four was fellow goaltender Josh Arnold. Rousselle credited both with season-long contributions and said a total team effort is what took his crew to their first OMHA final.

Assisting him behind the bench this season were Grant Thomson, Ian McCormack and Scott Anders. Comprising the rest of his squad were Matt deRee, Jordan Jeans, David Kornack, Andrew Marshall and Bryan Shaw.

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