

Winterhawks claim two titles at annual holiday tournament

By Steve LeBlanc
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Milton's oldest and youngest hosts reigned supreme at the annual Winterhawks Classic.

Both did so with hard-fought wins over teams they'd tied in round-robin play to match last year's tournament championship tally.

Thinned out a little with suspensions, the 'A' peewee hosts capitalized on an early powerplay and rode some impressive goaltending by Jeremy Kernichan to a 2-1 victory over the Woolwich Wildcats Sunday afternoon at Milton Sports Centre.

The narrow win gave Milton its second championship in three hours and allowed the six host teams to finish just over the .500 mark — at 11-10-3 over the four-day tournament.

The finalists had tied 2-2 a couple of days earlier, while Milton edged Cambridge 2-0 and fought to a 3-3 stalemate with Georgetown on the way to the title showdown.

Call-up Teshawn Chant scored the eventual game winner with less than a minute remaining in the second period, burying a rebound backhand into the top left corner on a delayed penalty. Christian McLaren assisted on the play, while Austin Winn struck just a few seconds into the Winterhawks' first powerplay midway through the opening

frame, with Joshua Anderson setting him up.

Kernichan turned back 18 of 19 shots in the championship rematch, preserving the razor-thin lead with a couple of scramble saves in the closing moments of play while his team was shorthanded. Woolwich cut the Winterhawks' lead in half with 4:12 left on a huge slapshot into the bottom left corner.

With division bragging rights on the line for their rematch with the Pickering Panthers Sunday morning, the mite Winterhawks scored on their first two powerplays and delivered topnotch defence on the way to prevailing 4-2.

Pickering had battled to a 6-6 draw with Milton in the preliminary round and tied things up with six-and-a-half minutes remaining.

But the hosts would not be denied, as Joseph Viola poked in a loose puck about a minute later before Noah Race scored a late insurance tally to essentially seal the deal.

Anthony Russell made a couple of dynamite diving saves to highlight his championship win, and enjoyed ample assistance from his blueline unit, which showed great hustle to get back and prevent countless Panthers shots.

Milton's mites went 1-0-1 in round-robin play before pummeling Credit Valley in the quarterfinals and getting a balanced attack to outdis-



Above, Milton Winterhawk Christian Lemaire (12) chases after a loose puck near the Applewood Coyotes net during round-robin AA tyke play at last week's Winterhawks Classic tournament at Milton Sports Centre. At right, Milton's Matthew Duggan (left) races an Applewood opponent to a rolling puck.
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tance Brantford 7-5 in the semis. The 'AA' tykes fell short of giving the hosts a 3-for-3 sweep in championship play, dropping a 5-1 decision (with an empty netter) to the Applewood Coyotes. Milton matched its rivals in terms of quality scoring chances, but needed a lengthy wrister by Ethan Rye with six minutes left to avoid

being blanked. Jack Wolchuk made some key saves through the first two periods to keep the Winterhawks within striking distance. After a 3-2 first-round defeat to Applewood, the Winterhawks 'AA' tykes rallied with lopsided wins over Credit Valley (7-1) and Flam- borough (8-1) to reach the final.

In other championship play, Applewood edged Stoney Creek 3-2 for the novice title, Goulding Park claimed tyke 'A' supremacy with a 3-1 victory over Burlington and Clarington nipped Stratford 2-1 for the tyke AE title. Steve LeBlanc can be reached at sleblanc@miltoncanadianchampion.com or on Twitter @MiltonOnSports.

Definitely not a December to remember for struggling IceHawks



The IceHawks are hoping that with the close of 2012 also comes an end to their recent offensive woes. Finding the back of the net just once in each of their losses this past weekend — both 5-1 defeats — Milton now rides a four-game losing streak and has dropped 10 of its last 12 games. In seven of those losses they've

IceHawk Michael Capicotto (grounded) reaches for the puck against Orangeville during Jr. A action Sunday. Steven Der-Garabedian / Special to the Champion

scored two goals or less. A lack of finish rather than creating opportunities seems to be the biggest problem, as the IceHawks matched both their opponents over the weekend in terms of shots on net. Milton also stayed out of the penalty box against Orangeville Sunday at Memorial Arena — allowing their guests just two powerplays — but could only muster a second-period tally by Daniel Holt. The Flyers built up a 4-0 lead en route to their decisive victory. At Toronto Lakeshore Saturday, Mil-

ton surrendered three second-period goals in an identical loss. Their lone goal came unassisted in the third period from team scoring leader Shane Bennett, who as of last night sat sixth in the league scoring race with 26 goals and 27 assists. Some late penalty trouble squashed any comeback hopes against Toronto Lakeshore. Justin Urquhart was in net for both losses. The IceHawks sat at 12-24 heading into last night's trip to Buffalo. They return to Memorial Friday to face struggling Hamilton at 7:30 p.m.