

Sports

Minor atom AE Winterhawks win OMHA championship

By Herb Garbutt
METROLAND WEST
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The goals 27 seconds apart by George Cohen and Ryan Chisholm early in the third period looked to have assured victory for the Milton minor atom AE Winterhawks.

When Quinton Bartholomew took Michael Amaro's pass in the high slot four minutes later and slid it just inside the post to extend the lead to 5-1, it appeared to be nothing more than icing on the cake.

But a furious comeback by Whitby meant the Winterhawks would need every one of those goals as they held off the visitors for a 5-4 win Saturday in front of a couple of hundred vocal supporters at Memorial Arena, completing a three-game sweep of the Ontario Minor Hockey Association final.

In addition to a balanced attack — the Winterhawks' 17 goals in their final four games were scored by 10 different players — Milton coach Jim Kotyrn said having most of the

team together for two years allowed them to work well together and support one another.

"Team chemistry is the biggest thing," he said. "There's no selfish play, they pass the puck, they hustle back."

And the Winterhawks needed everyone pulling together once Whitby rallied. Down 5-1, Whitby scored three times in five minutes. The second of those goals came with seven minutes remaining and the goalie on the bench for the extra attacker. At the time it looked like the last resort of a desperate team, but the move paid off and gave Whitby its first sustained momentum in the game.

Seconds after having a goal disallowed, Whitby won the draw and a high shot from the point made its way through a crowd of players and into the net to pull within one with four minutes remaining.

Milton goalie Thomas Jackson would shut the door the rest of the way and Milton would even kill off a late penalty for the win.

Despite going undefeated in 26 games to begin the season — win-



Members of the Milton minor atom AE Winterhawks celebrate after beating Whitby 5-4 to win the OMHA championship.

Eric Riehl / Canadian Champion (Follow on Twitter@halton_photog)

ning 19 in a row at one point — the Winterhawks didn't allow themselves to think about the OMHA title until this weekend.

"When we won the first two games (4-1 and 6-2), I thought we could probably win it," said Jordan Turley, who had a goal and an assist. "We have good goalies, we pass the puck and we have good defence." Part of the reason for that was Mil-

ton knew it would have to get by Orangeville, the team that beat them in last year's OMHA semis. Sure enough, the teams met again and it went right down to the wire with the Winterhawks pulling out a narrow 2-1 win in the deciding game. Saturday, it looked like it might be a little easier when Jacob McClary and Turley spotted Milton a 2-0 first-period lead. And though the

Winterhawks had a little more margin for error this time, they found themselves in another nailbiter. Once again, they came together for the win and an OMHA title.

Other members of the championship team are: Owen Clouston, Palmer Grice, Hailey Simoneau, Jason Trakas, Jake Kotyk, Jaokb Brazeau, Carter Patrick, Austin Green, Braden MacDonald and Jake Storey.

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