

# Major midget A's capture COBA championship

By Herb Garbutt  
OAKVILLE BEAVER STAFF

The Oakville major midget A's may have a bright future ahead of them, but they are making the most of the present.

The A's, with 11 of their 14 players eligible to return next season, edged the Mississauga Twins 6-5 to win the Central Ontario Baseball Association title. Oakville won all three of its games to claim its first tournament victory of the season.

Mark McIntyre singled, doubled and drove in two runs in the final game and Andrew DiMarco, Justin Mattiussi and Dave Venturi each had an RBI. Spencer Pecar picked up the win in relief of Matt Regan while Evan McBride notched the save with a perfect final inning.

Though it was a pair of wins over Mississauga that clinched the title, it was a 7-3 victory over the Georgetown Eagles in the opening game of the tournament that set the stage. Oakville lost both its

regular-season meetings against the Eagles and had a rough start in the tournament as Evan DiMichele surrendered three runs in the first two innings.

Oakville would get those runs, and more, back in the third as Eric Hall and Nic Burnell started a rally. The A's then got five straight hits from Venturi, Declan Baxter, Pat Griffin, Reagan and DiMarco.

DiMichele shut Georgetown down the rest of the way before handing off to McBride, who picked up the save.

"There was a lot of nervous energy before that game," said manager Rich Griffin, "but it gave us a huge confidence boost for the rest of the tournament."

Oakville then crushed the Twins 11-1 behind a complete game from McIntyre. Pat Griffin drove in three and Troy Findlay reached base three times and scored twice.

The A's were second in the regular season with a record of 15-5-2, finishing behind only Brampton, a



SPECIAL TO THE OAKVILLE BEAVER

**COBA'S BEST:** The Oakville major midget A's edged Mississauga 6-5 to win the Central Ontario Baseball Association title. Team members are: (front, from left): Andrew DiMarco, Declan Baxter, Troy Findlay, Mark McIntyre, (back, from left) coach Andrew Pierce, coach Jim Findlay, Spencer Pecar, Evan McBride, Justin Mattiussi, Matt Reagan, Evan DiMichele, coach Tyler Weech, Nic Burnell, Pat Griffin, manager Rich Griffin, Eric Hall, Dave Venturi and coach Matt Griffin.

team made up entirely of 18-year-old players. But the A's — who have just three 18 year olds — never got the chance to face Brampton as the regular season's top team was eliminated earlier in the tournament.

"Personally, I would have liked to play them," Griffin said. "It was a mixed opinion amongst our coaching staff. We beat them two of the three times in regular season so I knew we could handle them."

Griffin said the COBA tourna-

ment was the first time the entire lineup was healthy and that is encouraging news for the Ontario Baseball Association tournament Aug. 27-29 in Whitby.

"We've been playing shorthanded most of the summer," he said. "With everyone back and healthy, it helped set up our pitching rotation."

That allowed the A's three senior players, Sean Connolly, DiMichele and Venturi, to win their first COBA championship.

# Percy helps Canada win gold in Slovakia

By Herb Garbutt  
OAKVILLE BEAVER STAFF

With an important year ahead of him, Stuart Percy couldn't have started off his season any better.

Percy helped Team Canada win the Ivan Hlinka Memorial Tournament by edging the United States 1-0 Saturday in Piestany, Slovakia.

"It's a dream come true. Every kid who plays hockey wants to play for their country and I was lucky to get that opportunity," 17-year-old defenceman said. "There's certainly a lot of pressure to win gold but it's good to get a taste of that."

It won't be the last time there will be heightened expectations for Percy. For starters, he is entering his NHL draft year so he will be watched closely



Stuart Percy

by scouts all season. On top of that, his team — the Mississauga St. Michael's Majors — will play in the Memorial Cup this year after winning the right to host the Canadian Hockey League championship.

Percy believes the experience of playing in the Hlinka tournament will only benefit him heading into the season. The format of the tournament left little room for error, raising the intensity level for each game.

"You definitely had to be ready and focused," he said. "You had to get your rest and play every game like it was Game 7. I think that will help me because one of my goals is to have a bigger role (with Mississauga) next season."

Percy, the Majors' first round pick (15th overall) in the 2009 OHL draft, turned in a solid rookie season, recording three goals and 15 assists in 52 games. He has spent the off-season working on improving both his skating and his shot.

Percy didn't record a point in Canada's five games at the Hlinka tournament but did post a plus-3 mark.

The win over the U.S. provided a measure of revenge. In his previous international experience, representing Ontario at the World Under-17 Hockey Challenge in January, Percy and his teammates were beaten 2-1 by the Americans.

"To finally get gold," he said. "Words can't describe it."

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