

The Tribune

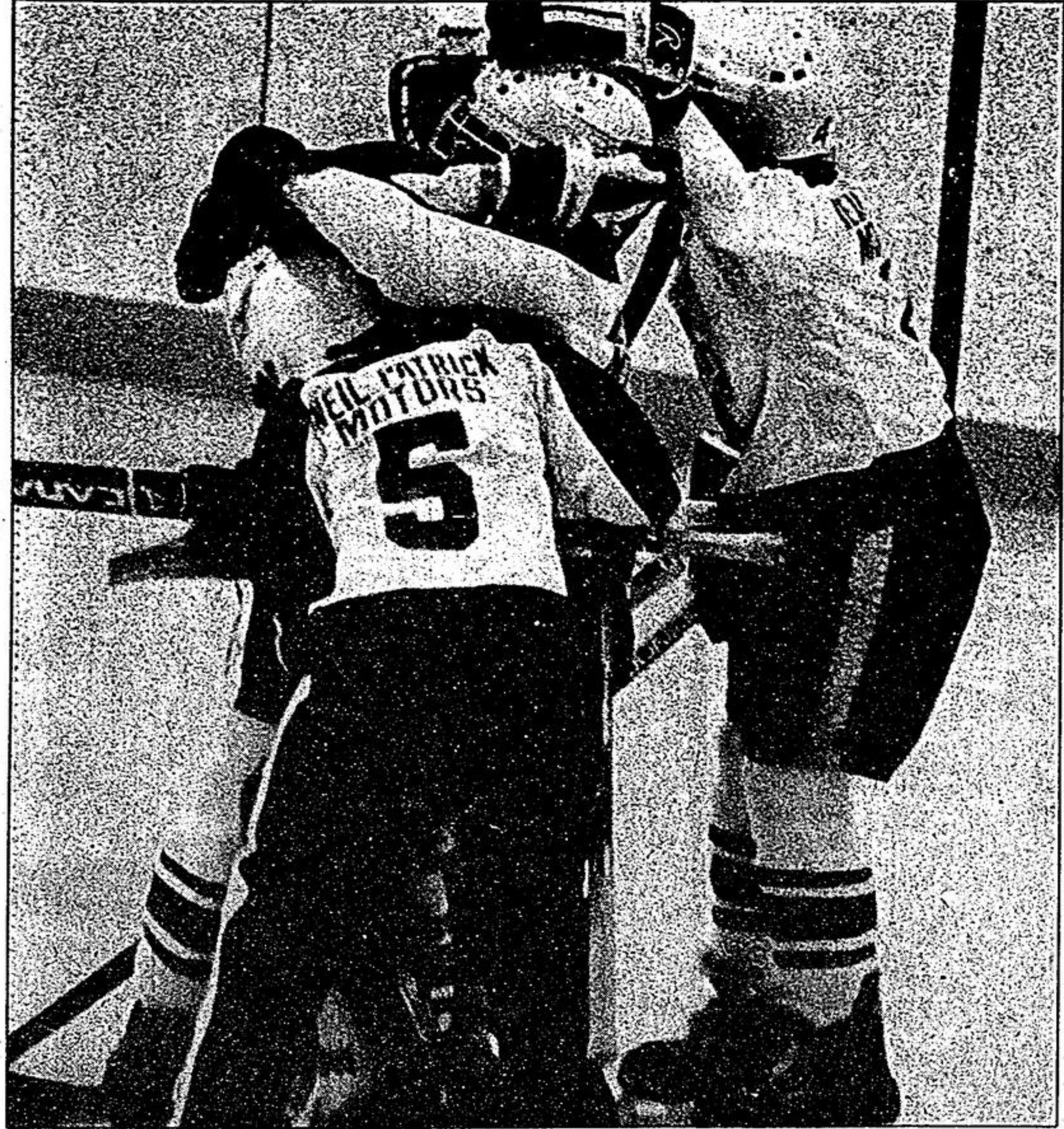
Sports & Classified



Second Section

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Novice Clippers celebrate 1-0 squeaker

The Neil Patrick Novice Clippers picked up their first win of the round robin playoff series on Friday night with a 1-0 win over Port Perry. Defenceman Sian Morrison (5) gives goalie Greg Sanford a well-deserved hug after time ran out on the Perry boys. Morrison and Phil Pridham set up Geoff Smith in the slot for the winning goal — a shorthanded effort to boot! — Kelly Connelly

Bruins in Ruins

By KELLY CONNELLY
Sports Editor

Two major upsets in first-round playoff action shook the Ontario Hockey League last weekend. Bowmanville and the Uxbridge Bruins, the league's first and second place clubs, were stunned by their opponents in best-of-seven series.

Defending junior "C" champion Bowmanville was defeated by Port Hope four games to one. Uxbridge suffered a similar fate to Little Britain who eliminated the Bruin boys Friday night in an 8-1 romp.

Uxbridge coach Randy Hall is still trying to figure out what happened. "If I had the answers, we'd probably still be playing," said the first-year skipper who moved

the Bruins from last to second place in one season. "Maybe we put too much energy into getting second place... maybe that's all the guys wanted to accomplish."

It certainly looked that way in game two of the opening round. After blitzing Little Britain 7-2 in the opener, Uxbridge appeared ready to sweep the series four straight. The local squad took a 5-3 lead midway through game two. Then everything seemed to collapse.

The Britain squad, noted for its aggressive style of play, decided that taking up residence in the penalty box (a habit in game one) was not smart strategy. To the chagrin of the Bruin defenders, it decided to trade in the cheap shots for the only shots that count — on

the net.

"Game two turned the series around," Hall recalled. "We were leading 5-3 and then Little Britain came back and scored four goals on us. They had the momentum from there on."

The team swept the next four games by scores of 7-6, 6-3, 7-5, and finally 8-1.

"Nobody really came through for us this season... our top scorers during the season didn't come through in the playoffs, and our goalies weren't playing well," admitted Hall. He said at present a major Bruin shakeup isn't in the offing for next season.

However, the coach added Uxbridge could do with a few "strong imports... and more quickness on the wing."

Double overtime win

Intermediate girls outsmart Belleville

Two overtime periods and a lot of frazzled nerves were expended before Stouffville's intermediate girls' hockey team clinched the consolation championship in an Otonabee tournament last weekend.

But coach Barry England doesn't need to be briefed on sudden death showdowns. His representative girls have been there before, and sport an impressive string of battle medals — called provincial championships — in the past four years.

Still, last Saturday's Otonabee consolation final was a classic Stouffville story. With only nine players dressed, the local girls staged a 3-2 comeback victory against Belleville; the final goal coming with three seconds remain-

ing in the second five-minute overtime period.

Up until that point, Stouffville had trailed 2-0 midway in the game before Shauna Blake closed the gap on a blistering slapshot from the point. Netminder Bonnie Hollingsworth sent the contest into extra minutes when she set up teammate Julie Thompson on an unusual passing play with two minutes left in regulation time.

"We were tired, so tired," recalled England. "Bonnie got mad and skated about 10 feet up the ice and caught Julie open on the right wing."

Although the goal rejuvenated his exhausted team bench, the first five-minute overtime saw neither club get a break. The rules of the second overtime were altered to increase the scoring potential. Both squads were to remove a skater on the ice every minute to promote a four-on-four, three-on-three, and if need be one-on-one situation.

"The tension was unbelievable," said England. "But Belleville used the wrong strategy. They sent out their best five players and left the better ones out there (as the clock ticked down)... when it got to two-on-two they got tired."

England wisely rested his two top shooters, Thompson and Michelle Coppins until the two-on-two situation developed. The gamble paid off. The Stouffville gunners dominated the ice surface and finally Thompson's low wrist shot beat the Belleville goalie on the glove side with time almost expired.

It was pure pandemonium, noted England. "The Belleville fans, our fans, and the teams were screaming and hanging over the boards," he chuckled.

However, there wasn't much to laugh about in game two. Keene, defending provincial "A" champions, handed Stouffville (defending "B" champs) its only defeat — a 4-3 squeaker — and the consolation ticket.

Since England's girls moved up to the "A" division this season, they've guaranteed themselves a heated arch-rival duel with Keene for the provincial crown in April. "Keene is the team to beat," promised England. "We lost to them three times last year, and we beat them out four years ago in the provincials... but they've got new players and now we're both in 'A'."

Scorers in the tourney included: GAME 1 (4-0 win over Belleville) — Coppins; Thompson, Blake (2); GAME 2 — Blake, Coppins, Thompson; GAME 3 — Blake, Thompson (2). Assists — Allison Lowery, Jannine Ferguson, Hollingsworth, Nicole Bird, Holly Purcell, Thompson, and Coppins.

Stouffville's midget girls won the Otonabee championship. See B3 for details.

NOTE: The intermediates are planning to host Peterborough in late February before it travels to Holland. Stouffville will also compete in the Brampton International tournament (Mar. 27-30), and the Provincial playdowns (Apr. 11-13).



Bowler sets mark

"I'm finally getting known," figured Scott Couperthwaite. The 16-year-old bowler from Stouffville set a Youth Bowling League record for the highest single score — 368 — two weeks ago. He also bowled eight strikes in that round.

What's his secret? "There aren't many competitors this year in my league," explained the senior pin basher who lives on 9th Line. "This year I've been pretty consistent with high scores... I guess I finally got my mark."

Couperthwaite almost hit his mark last year too. The youngster advanced to the provincial finals of the Youth Bowling Council Pepsi Challenge.

Who says teenagers shouldn't hang 'round alleys!

Ross tames Lions

JUNIOR

In junior girls' houseleague action Sunday night, Ross shut out the Lions 8-0.

Tracy Cumming collected a hat trick while teammates Kerry Holland and Tanis Gornall scored two goals apiece. Bonnie Tait rounded out the damage.

In senior houseleague hockey, L & M whipped the Bunnys 6-2.

L & M's Gloria Mintz blasted a pair of markers. A teammate (unidentified) scored four goals. Michelle Coppins and Julie Thompson responded for the Bunnys.

McNeil and Progress battled to a 4-4 tie.

McNeil's Shauna Blake copped a hat trick, and teammate Linda Whiteside added a single. Andrea Tricker collected a hat trick for Progress. Debbie Coxworth scored the other marker.

Port Hope punches land nowhere Bantams, peewees K.O. their rival

What's the only suitable warmup for Stouffville's fastest hockey team — the District Credit Union Peewee Clippers — before it competes in the big Quebec international tournament come mid-February?

Coach Glenn Whitebread would fall off his perch on the team bench if it were suggested that a first-

round playoff series with Port Hope is good exercise. The Clippers already eliminated the tepid Hope boys two games straight last week in a best-of-five series that was chopped to three after 14-0 and 8-1 embarrassments.

So much for Port Hopeless; that series was an obvious mismatch. But what does Stouffville's talented

Clipper contingent do for a tough workout?

It wins tournaments.

The Clippers captured their second tourney crown of the season Jan. 25, this time in Beaverton. Stouffville upended Norwood 2-1, arch-rival East Gwillimbury 3-1, and host Beaverton 7-3 for the championship.

The local squad clinched the Richmond Hill International Peewee Championship and Grand Championship Dec. 26.

ATOMS

The Stouffville Atom Clippers won the consolation crown at the Unionville Timex tournament two weekends ago.

The team was blanked 4-0 in the opener by a strong Wheatfield club from New York. Still, Stouffville got back on track in games two and three, ousting Grimsby in a shootout and beating the London Sabres 3-2 in the consolation final.

The Clippers play a five-team round robin series in their playoff schedule. So far the local gunners have beat Port Hope 7-2, and Monday night ousted Lindsay for the second time in the playdowns in a 6-5 cliffhanger.

In that contest, the Clippers blew a 2-0 lead and found themselves trailing 5-2 after netminder Jeff Willis let an easy dribble get by him. However Stouffville battled back to tie the game 5-5 on a powerplay drive with four minutes remaining. Brandon Pridham played hero in the final four seconds when he scored a double-shorthanded goal to steal the game.

Rounding out the tally was Trevor Bardell, Nathan Brown, Jason Whitebread, Jay Scaife, and Pridham (2). Assistant coach Barry Zeller praised the efforts of four minors — Darren Zeller, Bardell, Jay Hause and David Spoorenberg. The club is in first place and is scheduled to tangle with Bowmanville and Port Hope to decide round two's contenders.

NOVICES

The young Clippers almost reached the final of a Shelbourne tournament last weekend. The club defeated Hanover 3-2 in a three-goal comeback blitz. Trailing 1-0, Geoff Smith tied the contest with his first of two goals. Phil Pridham gave the Clippers the lead on an unassisted effort. Smith banged in Ryan Jefferson's rebound to secure the win with Lindsay Haylow assisting.

see playoffs/B3

Sideline Comment

Incredible tradition

By KELLY CONNELLY

Strange things have happened in the twilight zone of Stouffville hockey.

If Rod Serling, the creator and writer of the old Twilight Zone series, were alive today he might use the uncanny win-record of the Stouffville Girls Hockey League as a prelude to another weird episode.

It's not that winning is a strange or rare thing for our local girls. They've had their share of tournament championships, provincial crowns, and all-star night blitzes. But how they succeed is really mind boggling.

Girls' representative hockey in this town is famous for pulling off major victories with a half-empty bench. It's been going on for years. The intermediate club won its fourth consecutive All-Ontario crown last spring with a two-line battalion. The bantam contingent won the provincial championship five years ago with a similar body count, and the midgets made it to the final of the provincial "B" championship in '85.

How they pull off these victory purges with 10 or 11 sets of legs — sometimes only a line and a half — is extraordinary.

A few weeks ago, another Serling saga unfolded — this time with the Betz Pools senior girls' team. They won the Mississauga "D" championship with relief goalie Jannine Ferguson and seven teammates to back her up. That's one line, two subs and a goalie whose regular job is on defence!

But the impossible doesn't stop there. Last weekend the intermediate squad won the consolation final in Otonabee with nine players.

Somewhere in this incongruity there must be a strong-willed vertebra of talent. Girls who possess a great amount of energy and stamina to handle double-shifting — and lots of it.

Even Cliff Dunkeld, president of the Stouffville Girls Hockey League, shakes his head in bewilderment. It just doesn't make sense. But neither do the Toronto Maple Leafs who dress a maximum 18 players for a game and still lose to the Detroit Red Wings.

How can Stouffville's two-line squads knock off larger cities that boast three-line strategies? Dunkeld figures it must be the positive attitude and diehard verve that pervades the Stouffville bench.

Then there are exceptionally talented players like the Coppins sisters, Debbie Coxworth, Barb Goudie, Gloria Mintz, Laurie, Taylor, Nicole Bird. They certainly compensate for no third line.

Maybe Stouffville's rep teams are a lot hungrier than the larger city clubs. The local girls don't play as many games in one season as their foes, and possibly the dormant energy is built up to the point where it explodes in the provincials. The competition is exhausted from an active season schedule while Stouffville is just waking up. Perfect timing, suggests Dunkeld.

But that explanation too could be disputed. Whatever happened to the more games you play, the better you become. Stouffville teams don't get near as much practice time as their competitors, yet continue to put more pucks in the net.

Intermediate coach Barry England came up with a more pragmatic zinger: "When we go into tourneys with nine or ten players, the girls know they've only got so many on the bench and they pace themselves... but it's really a coaching nightmare."

Now I know why Stouffville's hockey skippers always look like they've seen a ghost after winning another title with a SKELETON STAFF.



Geoff Smith lone goal

In last weekend's victory purge, captain Scott McKinlay scored the winning goal in overtime against Norwood. Co-captain Jason Underwood collected a hat trick against East Gwillimbury. The agile centre scored a total six goals in the tournament.

But back to playoff action. Stouffville will tangle with Owen Sound in round two starting Friday night at the Rec Centre (7:15 p.m.). However Owen Sound is also suspect of going the futile route of Port Hope. The Clippers beat their northern neighbour three games straight in post-season action last year.

SPORTS SHORTS

Co-ed Basketball

Co-ed basketball is looking for players. The games will run Friday evenings at 6:30 p.m. at St. Patrick's School (Hwy. 7 between Markham and McCowan). Cost is \$2 per night. Call Suzanne Devau at 887-5467 for more information.

Adult Pleasure Skating

The Recreation Complex will host adult pleasure skating, for people 25 years and over, every Tuesday from 8-9 p.m. Admission is \$1.25 for members, and \$2.50 for non-members. Take your sweetheart for a Valentine's Skate on Tuesday, Feb. 11. Coffee and donuts will be served.

Ski team heads for Blue

The Spartan ski team from Stouffville Secondary will compete in the York Region Secondary School downhill slalom races at Blue Mountain

Feb. 13. Stouffville placed 18th out of 24 schools in the Stayner Invitational Jan. 10. However, this upcoming meet promises even tougher competition from northern schools.

Team members include Linda Hachey, Cathy Graham, Kim McConnell, Nancy Brownsberger, Leslie Stronach, Graydon Card, Lee Carney, Guy Cowan, Jeff Christensen, Wally Barbour, Jason Stronach, Jon Petrie, Blair Steel, Mark Ludbrook and Ian Beckett.

NHL Oldtimers-Peewee Fundraiser

The NHL Oldtimers will battle the Sunday Amateur Hockey League (SAHL) All-stars on Saturday night (7 p.m.) at the Recreation Complex. The event is organized by the Stouffville District Credit Union Peewee Clippers who hope to raise funds for their trip to Quebec (Feb. 13-23) where they will compete in a prestigious international tournament.

Also slated for Saturday evening is a Clipper-Unionville Jets game and an SAHL select team tangle. Admission is \$2 for adults and \$1 for children. No charge for kids under five.