

Players and parents ready for hockey

Baseball may still have the spotlight focussed upon it on the big sports stage, and football is well underway, but for the countless hockey players of all ages in the Stouffville area, the rubber is a flyin' as another season prepares to shift into high gear.

And once again, the Recreation Centre's ice surface will be crawling with helmeted pucksters as the Thanksgiving weekend marks the end of the preliminaries and the start of the real thing.

Except for the four to six year old Hockey School player, whom house league head honcho Wally Crowder reports will be taking instruction, without actual games being played, for the first half of

the year.

Crowder feels the restructuring of the Town's house league set up will work to the advantage of the kids, with the emphasis being on ability, more than age, in grouping players together in the different divisions.

Hockey schoolers will go up to Novice level when they are ready, which will see some seven year olds staying behind, while the keen six year olds will make the move upwards.

And while house league divisions at the lower levels will be based on two year age spreads, things will open up at the top. There, the age span will run from 12 through 15 years of age, with the more experienced 12 year



sports notes

bruce stapley

President of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Girls Hockey Association, reports that all the girls from last year's Atom house league have moved up to form a Junior level.

This game group of 8-13 year olds will make up four teams, with the cream of the crop forming a Pee Wee Rep team to join in the All-Ontario title hunt.

As well, Stouffville will be once again entering both a girls Senior C, and D, level Rep team in the North Toronto ladies loop. Both squads fared well at last spring's provincial championship tournament, and both hope to be even stronger this season.

The C's will include such talent as Debbie Coxworth, Karen Brodie, Teresa Ewing, Barb Goudie, and Gloria Mintz.

The D level ladies, who will be coached by Ted Lowery, will be made up of the likes of Allison Lowery, Shawna Blake, and Sheila Fockler.

So it's back indoors where it may as well be five in the afternoon as six in the morning, as hockey moms and dads return to the rink once again.

And don't forget to make every minute count, as spring is just five months away.

Clippers cooking in younger age divisions while lack of interest hurts older players

BRUCE STAPLEY
Correspondent

While there may be little interest in Rep hockey among the upper age groups, things are cooking down in the lower stratifications of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Minor Hockey system.

Rep program convener John Hutchinson reports two Atom teams are leading a pack of five all star Clipper outfits which will compete in Lakeshore Group Ontario Minor Hockey Association (OMHA) action this year.

This, he says, is an indication things are coming back, and that there may soon be a Clipper team at the Midget level again.

"It's a cyclical thing we're going through," said Hutchinson. "We are very strong at the lower levels. It's a matter of keeping

the kids interested. We have to hold the kids, keep them playing hockey."

The key, Hutchinson said, lies in a strong house league. "House league is where it all starts. If it is strong, you are going to have a good Rep organization. That's the way it's been for the 20 years I've been in it."

Hutchinson feels the return of Uxbridge Rep teams to the Lakeshore Group will go a long way towards making Rep hockey more exciting.

"When we lost them to the York-Simcoe League, it really hurt us. Their return will make competition more interesting."

Bill Wood, who was assistant coach with the Novice squad that took their zone title last season, will take over as head coach this

year. The Novice Clippers will play their home games Friday night at 7 p.m. at the Recreation Centre.

The Atom A team will be headed up by Wally Crowder, who coached the Novices two years ago. Home games are scheduled for Fridays at 8 p.m.

Louie Brown will coach the Atom B team, which will play at home Mondays at 7 p.m.

Bob McKinnon, who coached the Atom Clippers last year, will move up with the team as Pee Wee coach. Their home slot is 9:15 p.m. Friday.

Joe Infurnari will return as head coach of the Bantam

more, Crowder sees great interest at the lower levels indicating that the lost leagues will soon return.

"Last year we had 32 house league Pee Wees," Crowder says. "This year, there were 38 kids trying for the Pee Wee Rep team alone. Hopefully, in another two years, we'll have a Bantam house league."

Meanwhile, Steve Upton,

Clippers.

Infurnari took over as coach part way through last season, and is hopeful to see the team leave the troubled 1988-89 campaign behind. The Bantam Clippers will play their home games at 8 p.m. on Mondays.

All teams begin league play this week.

For this season, there was insufficient interest among the older aged players at the Midget level to even form a team.

Last year, Stouffville was only able to ice a B level Midget squad.

In 1987, the Midget Clippers won the OMHA championship in their division.

More to Monday Night Men's than simply scrambling pins

Bill Dart turns and walks back to join the boys on the bench, having just scrambled all five pins at the other end of the bowling alley with a well-aimed first shot.

For the 65 year-old lefthanded shooter with the pace-maker hooked up to his heart, it's another evening of relaxed competition.

Dart and his 235 average exemplifies the Monday Night Men's Bowling League at the Stouffville Bowling Centre. More talented than some of the 72 members, older than the majority, yet simply looking for a little diversion.

"It's a good night out," says Dart, as he fields some good natured ribbing from his teammates. "And it's good exercise."

In the next lane, League Past President Steve Ireland, just a baby compared to Dart, racks up his third consecutive strike, then proceeds to explain the appeal of the league.

"I've been a member for eight years. It's competitive, but it's a lot of fun. I was going to quit bowling several years ago, but I got hooked up with these guys."

While Ireland's average is among the league's best, he insists it's not an all-star league. "People sometimes say to me, 'I can't join. I'm not a good bowler.' But we tell them to come out anyway. Anyone can bowl and have a good time."

Down at lane six, the league's elder statesman, 75-year-old Percy Chilton, expresses the same sentiments as the younger men.

"I can enjoy the company," says the 15-year league veteran with a .180 average. "It's a night out for me. They're a fine bunch of boys."

Bob Morley, a 27-year league member with a .230 average, also feels it's a positive experience. "It's good enjoyment, a lot of fun."

And Cliff Dunkeld, the league's secretary who can remember when the guys bowled on only three lanes, 37 years back, says the mix of young and old makes for a comfortable atmosphere for everyone.

"Seventy-five per cent of our bowlers are under 30, I would think. They all get along great."

Many of the bowlers are multi-sport participants, like Steve Schell and Mark Fockler of the Town's Betz Pools Men's fastball team.

And there is a group of men who are actively involved as umpires in area baseball leagues, who come out on Monday night to rack up some strikes of their own. These include Cliff Bass, Al Piette, Mike Davies and Norm Ewing.

There is a 7 p.m. division, and a 9 p.m. flight, with both playing off in April after the 32-week regular season is completed.

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