

# stouffville sports

## Clippers are still perfect

The defending Ontario Minor Hockey Association champion Edwards Murphy bantam Clippers are still undefeated after four playoff games.

The Painters put away Peterborough with a 6-1, series-clinching victory last week before downing league power house Cobourg 4-2 in the first game of their second playoff set Sunday afternoon.

The Clippers, who defeated Peterborough 3-1 in the first game of their best-of-three playoff-opening series, had to settle for a 2-2 tie in game two.

But the Stouffville crew dominated game three, with Tim Smart, Graham Crowder, and Adam Crowder each picking up a goal and an assist to lead the attack. Mike Underwood, John McKinnon, and Don Wilkie netted singles for the Clippers, who also got assists from Ian Ellis (2), Roger McMann (2), Craig Wood, Steve Wilcox, and Scott Assinck.

McMann, Ellis, and Wilcox counted the Clippers' goals in game one, with Wilcox and Wood connecting in the second contest.

Sunday against Cobourg, the Clippers jumped into a two-goal lead on scores by McMann (from McKinnon) and Smart (from David Hutchison). But Cobourg fought back to square things before the first period was out.

Smart gave Stouffville the lead, from Hutchison, before Hutchison sealed the win with help from Smart.

Clippers' goalkeepers Brad Hackert and Evan Boyd stood out throughout the four playoff encounters.

The Clippers continue their series with Cobourg on Monday.



Photo/STEVE SOMERVILLE

Roaming Ranch Hands of Stu's catcher Michelle Sorichetti (right) makes a gallant attempt in trying to snare this fly ball during action against Whitby in the Greens Restaurant Sno-Pitch

Tournament on Saturday. Sorichetti's efforts in making the catch failed as this batter could not get out of the way in time. A total of 15 teams took part in this event.

## Wolves prey on Markham

Matt Turner's goal on a slap shot from the point six minutes into overtime gave the Central Ontario major pee wee Wolves a 6-5 over the Markham Thunderbirds in a recent Ontario Minor Hockey Association eastern AAA playoff action.

The win gave the Wolves a two-game sweep of the opening round, best-of-three playoff series.

It was the second dramatic game-winning score of the set for Turner, who's backhand late in the third period went in off a stick to direct the Wolves to a 2-1

victory in the opening contest. It looked as if the teams would be required to play a third game when Markham took a 4-1 advantage halfway through the middle stanza of the second contest.

But with the Wolves trailing 5-3 and only three minutes left in regulation time, Stouffville's Grahame Smith notched a pair of markers to send the game into overtime.

The Wolves will now take on the first-place finishing squad from Brooklin-Whitby in round two of the playoffs.

## Hell's Bells ring up sno-pitch title

It was more like slop pitch than snow pitch at the town park as 15 mixed teams contested the Greens Restaurant Sno-Pitch Tournament over the weekend.

And when the last soaker had been endured, Hells Bells had rung up five consecutive victories to finish off their comeback climb to the title.

The winning crew, with male members coming mostly from teams in the York-Durham Men's Slo-Pitch League, dropped its opener 7-0 to Raisins on Saturday. But the local squad came back to

qualify for the playoff round by disposing of Nicastro's Landscaping (7-1) and the Bad News Bears (15-0).

The Bells edged the Laurentian Ice Holes 7-5 in their first playoff contest.

The Bells qualified for the championship match by sneaking past last year's co-champions, the Best of the Nest, by a 6-3 count in a game that required two extra innings to decide.

The Bells then overpowered Pickering's John Vos Landscaping 13-4 in the championship contest to

take the tournament's \$500 first-place prize. The team donated \$100 of its winnings to the Children's Wish Foundation in memory of the late Dan McNeil.

The John Vos squad staked its claim to the \$300 second-place prize.

Tournament co-organizer Murray Pattenden said the event, which included a dance at Latham Hall Saturday night, was a huge success. "There was a lot of slipping and sliding, but everyone commented on how much they enjoyed it," he said.

## Ice rules need to be consistent

It would appear the folks who run the game of hockey, from the lowest levels all the way up to the National Hockey League, have declared checking from behind and unwarranted stick work to be offside.

A recent letter from Metropolitan Toronto Hockey League (MTHL) president J.R. Gardner, printed in the Toronto Star's MTHL page, claimed checking from behind to be a "cowardly act."

As such, the practise will not be tolerated, Gardner continued. Henceforth, players penalized for hitting or checking from behind, or for major stick infractions, will be hauled on the MTHL carpet for a hearing. A match penalty for same will mean a suspension.

Whitchurch-Stouffville Minor Hockey Association president Wally Crowder says the MTHL is merely falling in line behind the

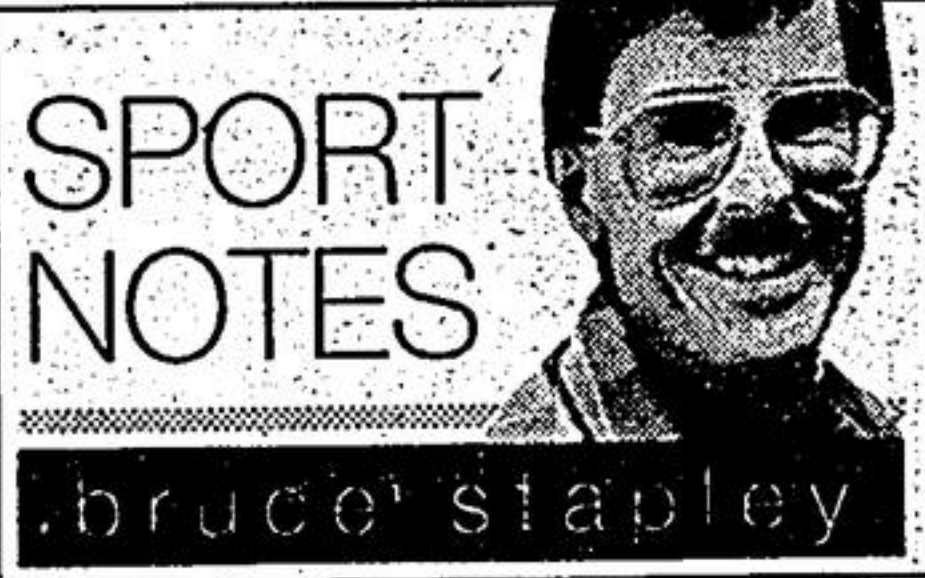
Ontario Minor Hockey Association (OMHA), of which the local outfit is a part.

The OMHA outlawed checking from behind at the beginning of this season, upping the old two minute sentence to a five minute major and a game misconduct.

There have been problems, concedes Crowder, which require that game officials be right on top of things in order to call it right. "Some players are turning their backs on the player checking them at the very last second. The refs have to make a lot of discretionary calls."

But in general, the message is getting through, said Crowder, which is good for the game. "Some kids have been paralyzed after being hit from behind," he said. "They're all jumping on it now, even the NHL is on to it."

As for stick work, the prez suggests the kids have started to



keep the lumber on the ice ever since the OMHA started turfing players after their third infraction of the game. "If you keep your stick up, you're gone," said Crowder.

Crowder said, however, that there are still inconsistencies among the various organizations which can cause minor havoc at tournaments including MTHL and OMHA teams.

"The OMHA requires neck guards be worn by all players, whereas the MTHL doesn't. At a recent tournament in Buffalo, our

kids had to go out and buy mouth guards because they were required by the tournament organizers."

As for the question of body contact in general in minor hockey, Crowder is not overly supportive of the current rules which prohibit it before the pee-wee level.

His argument is that players should be taught how to check properly at an early age to prevent them from overdoing it when they are finally given the green light.

"It's a novelty, and they can abuse it," said Crowder.

"It takes two years to learn there is a time to check and a time to lay off."

As it is now, many bantam level players are finding themselves out of position after administering a body crunching hit, Crowder argued. Better to learn young when the kids are smaller and the

potential to do damage is much less. That way, there's a better chance they'll have the art mastered by the time they reach the higher levels.

Having looked at the plight of the Stouffville District Secondary School (SDSS) Senior boys basketball team last week, we should mention that coach Rusty Hick's SDSS junior boys' cage crew headed into the exam break sporting an overall record of three wins and five losses.

Hick suggests the team should make up some ground in February when his Spartans play five games against squads with a combined mark of 15 wins and 18 losses.

Hick points to Jason Reesor at point guard, Steve U'Ren at centre, Ryan Jefferson (forward), and Chris Leonard (forward) as his standouts to date.