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Revived juveniles on road in OMHA final form

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA
Staff Writer

For a team which almost folded in the pre-season, the Stouffville juvenile Clippers have come a long way.

Waiting almost until the last minute to see if they could ice enough players to form a squad for the season, the Clippers overcame that adversity and today find themselves in a familiar place — the Ontario Minor Hockey Association A championship series.



Making their third straight appearance in the OMHA final, the defending champions will meet Harrow in a best-of-five affair that begins tomorrow in the Leamington-area community.

The series returns to the Stouffville Arena March 29 at 4 p.m. and March 30 at 3 p.m. A fourth game, if required, would be played in Harrow April 5 at 9 p.m.

"Right from the start of the year we were lucky to get a team together," conceded Clippers head coach Dan Fontanna.

In their quest to retain the crown, Fontanna anticipates his team will have

its hands full. Fontanna bases his assumption after watching his team lose to Harrow 5-1 in a tournament last year.

"They've got big defencemen and fast forwards and we are more of a finesse team. We will see how it works out," he said.

With four of his 17 players having made the trip to the final all three years, Fontanna says experience and talent will be keys for the Clippers.

Fontanna also credits a system the players have bought into.

"It's neat that all five guys know what they're doing on the ice at all time. What's made it amazing is that I haven't had a chance to work with the entire team all at once. I've tried to make the best of it," he said.

About the only problem Fontanna has experienced this season is having a full complement of players out to practices and games. But when games begin, he feels it's a competitive group. And it's one that he's proud to coach.

"When this team is all together, it's more talented than last year's. I can't complain with the way they've played."



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