

MEET THE CHAMPS

Stouffville hockey teams, track star honoured at municipal ceremony

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA
Staff Writer

To win a gold medal is an accomplishment.

To do it on a provincial, national or even the international stage isn't done every day.

Considering it a special occasion, the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville pays homage each year to individuals or teams who have attained provincial, national or international status at a Recognition of Athletes night.

The 21st edition of this event took place Monday at EastRidge Evangelical Missionary Church.

One individual, Natalie Geiger, and four minor hockey clubs including the Stouffville Clippers minor peewees, bantams, juveniles and Stouffville Markham Stars BB midget girls were honoured.

Bantam Clippers coach Don Easter appreciated what the town does for its

champions.

"Events such as this are part of what makes Stouffville unique. I believe it's incredibly important for young people to see their efforts do not go unnoticed and to see themselves as part of a larger community," he said.

Juvenile Clippers coach Brent Gibson made his second trip to the awards night.

"It's neat for the town to do this and it's nice to recognize the athletes and coaches. I know the kids really appreciate it," he said.

Geiger, a Grade 12 student at Stouffville District Secondary School, accepted a scholarship to attend Notre Dame University in South Bend, Ind., later this year.

The 17-year-old won the gold medal in the 400 metres at last year's Canadian junior championships.

At last year's world youth track and field championships in the Czech Republic, Geiger anchored the Canadian women's medley relay team and helped it earn the bronze medal.



STAFF PHOTOS/MIKE BARRETT

Mayor Wayne Emmerson congratulates Alexandra Villarin of Markham-Stouffville's midget Girls BB provincial champs.

It was the first time a Canadian relay team finished on the podium at the world youth championships.

Among the team recipients, the Clippers minor peewees

skated off with their first Ontario Minor Hockey Association title that was climaxed with a three-game sweep of Brampton Youth in their first-to-six-point final series.

Coached by Rick Sooley, team members included: Robbie Armstrong, Matthew Avoledo, Joshua Burkholder, Christopher Cadaret, Matthew Carrick, Patrick Coutts, Justin Dube, Jackson English, Cody Femia, Bobby Lamirande, Cameron Nowkiow, Owen Pearce, Spencer Roberts, Evan Smith, Mitchell Smith and Eric Zambri.

During the same weekend the minor peewees celebrated their title at the Stouffville Arena, the Clippers bantams skated off with their OMHA championship that was capped with a three-game sweep in their best-of-five series against Southpoint.

Those back-to-back titles marked the first time in at least 25 years two Stouffville teams accomplished the feat in the same campaign.

The Clippers then advanced to the Ontario Hockey Federation championships in New Liskeard, only to fall short in the final to the host Temiskaming Shores Puckhounds 3-0.

Coached by Don Easter, Ron Bremner, Darryl Sauro and Bill Crago, team members included: Robbie Acton, David Beloff, Connor Cadaret, Taylor Clifford, Curtis Crago, Brett Hembruff, Josh Machesney, Daniel McMahon, Matthew Miniaci, Daniel Perry, Kyle Pontone, Steven Tait, Sal Rabito, Kyle Sauro, Chris Smith, trainer Lee Palladino and manager Mark McMahon.

Also recognized were the

Clippers juveniles, who won their OMHA title after defeating the Pelham Panthers in their first-to-six-point final.

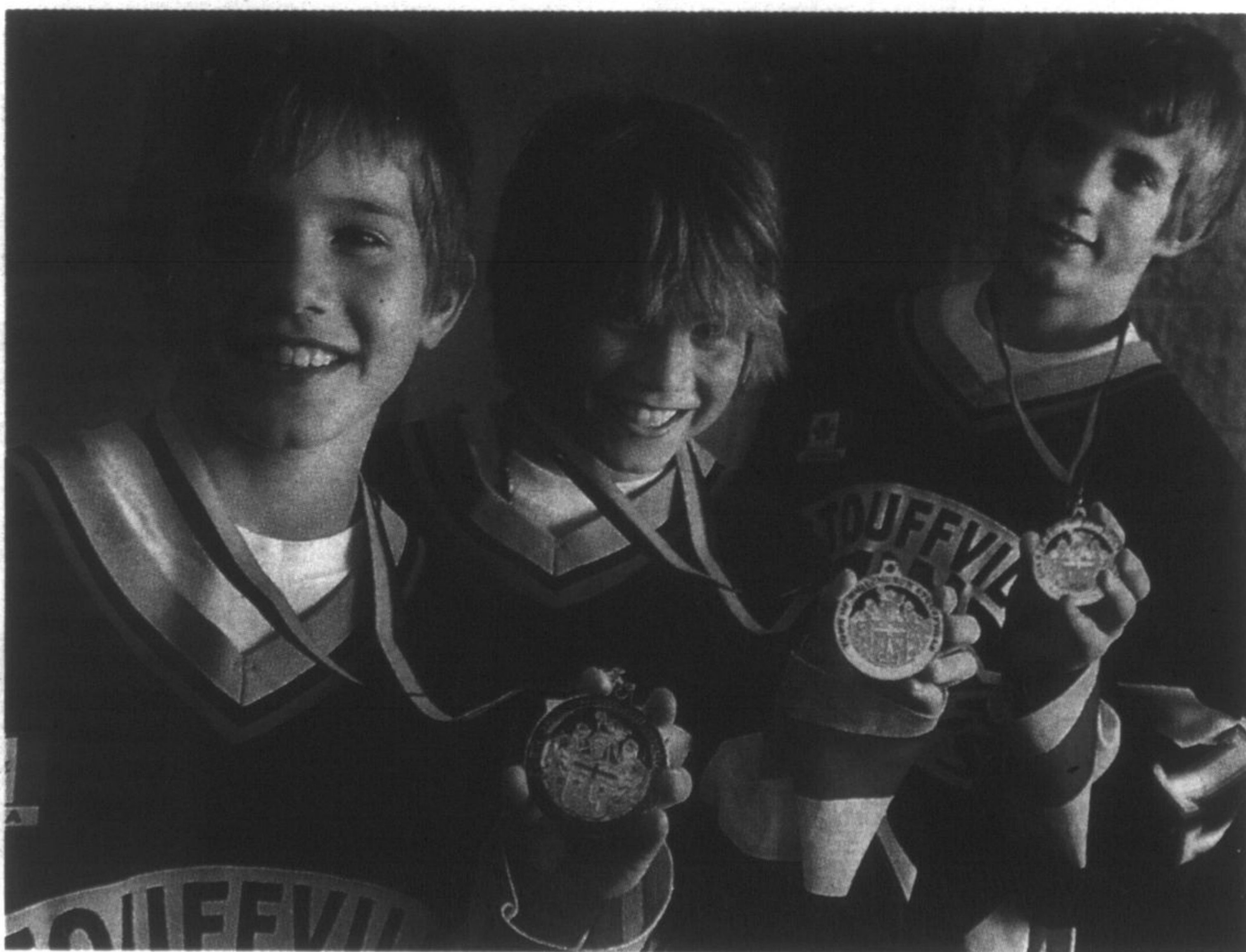
For the Clippers, their appearance in the OMHA final was their fourth in six years.

The title won was their first since the 2005 season.

Coached by Brent Gibson along with Andy Gibson and Norm Fretz, team members included: Jake Balsdon, Kurt Brillinger, Stephen Brown, Marten Cushing, Adam Davis, Matthew Easter, Eric Gainsbrook, Jeff Gibson, Nathan James, Kyle Miller, Chris Normandeau, Devin Paynter, Jimiel Selmanovski, Andrew Steward, Nicholas Stratas, Corey Thomson, Landon Wideman, Phil Wood, Brad Maxwell, manager Janice Auld and trainer Chris Flanagan.

The Stars midget BB entry captured their provincial title after defeating the Durham West Lightning 4-1 in the title game in Etobicoke.

Coached by Tom Bouchard, Gord Bince, Jack Coutts, Susan Coutts, Susan Jennings and Cameron Wilson, team members included: Lauren Arena, Melissa Armstrong, Kelsey Bince, Allysia Bouchard, Brittany Casquette, Kylie Chinery, Melissa Coutts, Trisha Egberts, Tristin Giles, Alison Jennings, Jesseka Paguirigan, Katie Reinholdt, Alexandra Villarin, Trista Williams and Emily Wilson.



The Smith brothers, Mitchell (left), Evan and Chris, were presented medals for their Ontario Minor Hockey Association championships at Monday's civic ceremony. Mitchell and Evan were on the minor peewee team and Chris was on the bantam Clippers.

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