

Parade being mapped for OMHA hockey champs

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If that wasn't enough, two Clippers teams also skated off with York-Simcoe championships.

The Clippers minor peewees defeated Aurora Tuesday to win their final in three straight games. The Clippers midgets claimed their York-Simcoe title, beating the Markham Waxers at Markham Centennial arena Monday.

A third team, the tyke Clippers, is playing Unionville in the York Simcoe final.

Mike Humphreys, outgoing Whitchurch-Stouffville Minor Hockey Association president, was elated with the most successful season he's been a part of.

"It's pretty exciting. This year we had 13 of our 19 rep teams reach the OMHA or York Simcoe semifinals," he said. "That's close to 60 per cent of our teams that were still alive at that point. That's pretty impressive."

HELP FOR COACHES

Why this year?

"We've worked hard on our communication within the organization and use Total Hockey Skills for our training and even power skating. That's helped us. Especially with our younger teams," said Mr. Humphreys, who coached an AE team this season. "Giving information to our coaches so they can communicate better and work together. Our success comes from that," he said.

A hot stove club for coaches featured guest speakers, including Toronto Maple Leafs assistant coach Keith Acton, sharing tips. Mr. Acton, who won a Stanley Cup during an NHL career of more than 1,000 games, is a Stouffville resident and a graduate of the association.

Humphreys is optimistic bigger and better things are in store for the

association with new training facilities at the privately owned Hockey Lanes on Hwy. 48 and the new double pad arena near Stouffville District Secondary School, which will open in early 2010.

In the peewee A final, the Clippers held leads of 2-0 and 3-1, but Oakville fought back in front of a big crowd, including a large Stouffville contingent.

Evan Smith, Justin Dube and Cody Femia scored for the Clippers.

Also playing a key role was goaltender Jake Murray.

"He played unbelievable, he made some timely stops," Clippers head coach Joe Lombardo said.

In analyzing his club's victory, Lombardo was quick to credit his players.

"Our kids have something you can't teach them — they refuse to lose, they never say never," he said.

For most of the players, it's the second straight year they've won an OMHA title.

Serving as an assistant coach with the team last year, Lombardo felt this year's championship was more difficult to attain.

"It certainly is difficult to defend the title since other teams are gunning for you and they add a few new players," he said. "The first title was hard to win, this one was even harder."

TO OHFS IN STURGEON FALLS

The Clippers will represent the OMHA in the Ontario Hockey Federation A tournament during the Easter weekend in Sturgeon Falls.

Other teams will include Port Credit from the Greater Toronto Hockey League, Woodstock from the Alliance, Timiskaming from the Northern Ontario Hockey Association and host West Nipissing.

In the peewee AE finale, the Clippers set the tone in the first period when Mark Gavrilov scored



METROLAND STAFF PHOTO/RIZIERO VERTOLLI

Justin Dube celebrates his goal for the Stouffville Clippers in the deciding game of the OMHA peewee A championship series in Oakville Wednesday. Stouffville won 3-2 to advance to the Ontario Hockey Federation tourney.

the first of his two goals on a short-handed effort.

David Maikawa also deposited two goals while singles came from Matt Armstrong and Austin Peddle.

Jack Porter had three assists while Peddle, Jesse McSwiggan, Spencer Tait, Sam Miller, Hunter Davidson and Taylor Peterson each had one.

Also making a big contribution was netminder Alex McKenzie and strong defensive work from forward Paul Henderson.

"Wednesday was truly a team

win," Clippers head coach Chris Miller said. "It was a great effort by all, great attitude and focus by all."

AE TEAM HAD INCENTIVE

The victory by the Clippers atoned for a heartbreaking 4-3 overtime loss at the Stouffville Arena Tuesday that evened the series at two games apiece and set the stage for the dramatic fifth and deciding game.

Miller felt that setback gave his group of 12-year-olds added incentive.

"The boys were disappointed about the loss on Tuesday. It was a good game and exciting. But the loss left them upset and we (coaching staff) told them to forget about it and move on. We used those feelings to focus on Wednesday's game," he said.

It was the end of a nice run.

"We wouldn't have guessed this kind of success at the start of the year. But the kids progressed so quickly over the year that we started to feel something good was going to happen," he said.



METROLAND STAFF PHOTO/RIZIERO VERTOLLI

Stouffville's peewee A Clippers and fans celebrate their OMHA championship in Oakville Wednesday.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Stouffville's peewee AE (additional entry) Clippers enjoy their Ontario Minor Hockey Association trophy after a 6-0 win in Milton Wednesday night.